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# TREATISE

OF

# REPENTANCE.

BOTH

## Legal, and Evangelical;

More especially and chiefly of the LATTER,

Which is very AMPLY infifted upon, and all that is necessary to be treated of, concerning that EXTENSIVE DUTY, faithfully Deliver'd.

The TEXTS of SCRIPTURE relating to it are Explain'd and Illustrated, and the Cases of Conscience arising from it, Stated and Refolv'd.

The WHOLE is Design'd, in order to the Essectual Promoting the PRACTISE of REPENTANCE, and GODLINESS, in this Degenerate Age.

By the Late Reverend JOHN EDWARDS, D. D.

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#### THE

# PREEACE:

Having some Years ago Publish'à a Discourse of Faith, giving an Account of the entire Nature of it; I now present the Reader with another Discourse, equally Useful and Necessary, namely, Concerning the other Great and Eminent Grace of Repentance. It is true, Repentance is plac'd before Faith, in Mark 1. 15. Repent ye, and believe. This is the Order which John the Baptist assigns these two Graces. And St. Paul thought fit to fet Repentance before Faith in Acts 20. 21. where he tells us, That he testified (or preach'd) Repentance towards God. and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And the same Apostle ranks them after the same Manner in Heb. 6. 1. where he mentions, first the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and then that of Faith towards God. Thus in these forecited Passages, Repentance bath the Precedence of Faith; and yet it is most certain, That Faith is first: But how these are to be reconcil'd, I will endeavour to shew; We

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We must then distinguish concerning Repentance, and we must distinguish too concerning Faith. Repentance is either initial, and newly begun, or perfect and compleat. The first sort consists in Grief, Trouble and Anguish of Mind, upon the Sight and Sense of Sin. The second is a deep Hatred of it, joyn'd with Reformation of Life. So likewise the same Distinction is to be made concerning Faith, it is either initial, and imperfect, or perfect and compleat. The first sort is a general believing of what God hath said; an Assent to the Divine Word and Testimony: 'The second is a hearty Approving of what is assented to; with a particular and sim Reliance on the Meritorious Undertakings

of Jesus Christ for Life and Salvation.

Now then, this is to be faid, That the Repentance which is initial, and imperfect (the same with Legal Repentance) precedes that Faith which is Perfect and Evangelical. This is not be doubted in the least; because Terror of Conscience, Contrition and Anguish of Mind, and all the Acts and Parts of Legal Repentance, necessarily prepare the Way for the Perfect Faith, and are but in order to it; and therefore must needs be before it: And consequently, we must hold, That Perfect, and Evangelical Repentance, follows after that kind of Faith. And as for the first fort of Faith, which I mention'd, we must affert, That it is before the first fort of Repentance; for the Sinner can't grieve for his Sins as he ought, till he hath some Degree of Faith; that is, Till be believes God to be true, and that his Word, and particularly his Threatnings are such, and (as the Consequence of that) that Punishment is due to him for his Sins. This General Belief then, is necessary in order to, and makes way for, this Repentance; and therefore must needs be before it. The Ninevites first believ'd, and then repented, Jonah 3. 5. They believed God, and proclaim'd

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claim'd a Fast : Which Fast was a signal Act of Repentance. We are affur'd by the Apostle, That without Faith it is impossible to please God, Heb, 17. 6. Whence I infer, That God will not be pleas'd with our Repentance, if it be not grounded on Faith; and consequently there must be some Faith, a General One at least, that must go before Repentance. This therefore we may embrace as an undoubted Proposition, That Faith, as 'tis a Belief of God's Word, and giving Affent to Divine Testimony, takes place before Re-The season of a mount of the

But there is (as I faid before) a second Acception of Faith, namely, As 'tis the Specifick Act approving what is affented to, and relying on the Meritorious Undertakings of our Lord, and trusting on the Divine Promises, and applying them to our selves, and our own Condition. Now, This cannot be, till there have been some foregoing Acts of compleat, and Gospel Repentance; for the Conditions of the Promises must in some measure be perform'd, before the Promises themfelves can be apply'd. This can't be deny'd; and therefore we must conclude, That the compleat Evangelical

Faith follows Repentance.

The hort is, That Faith precedes Repentance in one Way, and Repentance precedes Faith in an other. Or take it thus, Some Acts of Faith go before some Acts of Repentance; and on the other hand, Some Acts of Repentance go before some Acts of Faith, and I have particularly flew'd what they are. This is the exactest Account that I can give of the Order of Faith and Repentance, and of the Priority of one before

the other.

But though I have thus distinguish'd concerning Faith and Repentance; yet they cannot, they must not be separated in the Lives of true Converts. Faith without Repentance is dead; and Repentance likewise without

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without Faith, is infignificant, useless and dead. He ebat is a true Believer, is a true Pemitent: Et vice verfa. Therefore having (as I told the Reader at first) treated on the Doctrine of Faith, I am engag'd to handle that of Repentance. Which I have endeavour'd to do, with all Plainness and Perspicuity, in the following Papers; which were Sermons preach'd to those Audiences, which were under my proper Ministry. I thought it necessary to be Moving and Pathetic, whilst I had so serious and important a Subject under my Hands. I have taken Care to raise the Affections, as well as inform the Judgments of those I spoke to, and now of those I write to; both which I hope will prove very Edifying and Beneficial. This is the sincere and earnest Prayer of the Reader's,

Faithful Friend and Servant,

In JESUS CHRIST,

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# A Brief SCHEME

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Inning from Sin unto Gat.

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# TREATISE or REPENTANCE.

Grounded on

ACTS iij. 19.

Repent ye therefore, and be Converted.

ROM these Words I design to treat of the Doctrine of REPENTANCE, which comprehends in it that of Conversion:
And I will undertake these following Things, in order to the full discussing of it.

First, I will shew what are the Forerunners and Preparatives of Repentance: Or, which is the same, I will assign the Nature of Legal Repentance.

Secondiy, I will display the Nature of True Gospel Repentance, by describing it by its Essential Acts or Parts, and by its Essels and Fruits.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Objections and Excuses which are generally made against Repentance shall be distinctly Answer'd.

Fourthly, The Motives and Encouragements to

Repentance shall be propounded.

Fifihly, The Directions and Means which are to be made use of for the effectual obtaining of

Repentance shall be låid before the Reader.

Of these several Heads I purpose, God willing, to discourse very largely: And the Infinite and Eternal God vouchsafe to grant, that the handling of this weighty Subject may have such an Instuence on all of us, that we may be made throughly sensible of our Duty in this particular, and that we may Conscientiously set our selves to the Practice of it.

The First Demand to be satisfied is, What are the Forerunners of Gospel Repentance? Or, What is Legal Repentance? For Divines have well distinguish'd between that Repentance which is Legal, and that which is Evangelical; and they make the former to be an Entrance or Preparative to the latter. Let us see then what that Legal Repentance is. Those words of the Apostle in Rom. 8. 15. The Spirit of Bondage to fear, do rightly express the Nature of it. For what is that Spirit of Bondage to fear, but a feeing and feeling our Slavery and Misery by reason of Sin, with a Fear and Dread of God's Wrath for it? This is when the Mind is enlighten'd to see its Sinfulness, and to be fensible of its dangerous Condition. It is a Grief, Anguish and Pain of Soul arising from its reflecting on its former evil ways, and confidering the Vengeance of Heaven which hangs over it. There is a continual Restlesness, Stinging, and

Torment in the Mind. The Holy Scripture hath variously express'd this. Those that labour under it are said to be humbled, to be bowed down, to have the Arrows of the Almighty Ricking fast in them, to be wounded in Spirit: And many other Terms are used to set forth the Nature of this Legal Remorse, or Repentance. Now, it is certain that the Children of God are not Strangers even to This fort of Repentance. They generally are partakers of the Spirit of Bondage before the Spirit of Adoption is bestow'd upon them. There is in all Persons before Conversion this Legal Spirit, in a greater or lesser measure. The Law precedes the Gospel. The Servile and Slavish Spirit is in order to the Free one. The Heart must be prick'd, bruised, wounded, broken, and even dissolved. The Soul must be humbled through the sense of that miserable State which it hath plunged it felf into by the voluntary commission of Sin, and offending of God. It must feel those Terrors and Pangs which proceed from the apprehension of God's Displeasure, and the Fear of Punishment which Sin brings with it.

The Proposition then which I am to insist upon is this, That Legal Compunction and Contrition, the Spirit of Bondage to sear, and to be exceedingly troubled and disquieted, are Preparatives to true Evangelical Repentance, to Conversion and Saving Grace. Sound Humiliation is a fore-runner of real Reformation in the Soul, and in the manners of Penitents. The way to true Felicity is Spiritual Poverty. There must be a Wounding before there be a Healing. Sorrow and Trouble of Spirit make way for Joy and Serenity of Mind. We read in the Gospel, that an Angel came down and troubled the Waters, and

that made them Healing Waters. Sinners must first lie under the Terrors of the Law, before they find themselves quieted and pacified. Elijah first heard a great and boisterous Wind, and then selt an Earthquake, and after the Earthquake there appear'd a Fire: All which were the Harbingers and Forerunners of the small and still Voice which he heard.

You may eafily apply this to our present Purpose: The Tempest, and Earthquake, and Fire, represent the Spirit of Bondage: those must be heard and felt before we be acquainted with the still Voice, the Voice of Peace and Gladness in our Souls. This is the Method which God often uses, tho' I do not say, always. Legal Terror goes before Evangelical Grace and Peace. Hagar conceives before Sarah; the Bond-woman before the Free-woman; Ihmael is brought forth before Isaac. This represents to us the order of the Spiritual Births; the Soul is first convinced of Sin, and of the heinous nature and danger of it, before it be throughly converted. I Sam. 2. 6, 7. The Lord killeth, and then maketh alive, he bringeth down to the grave, and then bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and then maketh rich; he bringeth low, and then lifteth up. We must be humbled by the Law before we be exalted by the Gospel. Conviction is the first step to Evangelical Repentance, which is attended with Peace and Joy. This is the Do-Arine which I will now inlarge upon: And to give you a further account of it, I will shew you, 1. What are the Effects of this Legal Repentance. 2. What are the Means whereby it is produced. 3. What are the Measures and Degrees of it. 4. What are the Reasons why this Repentance must generally be a forerunner of the Evangelical one. Laftly, I will Apply all. 1. The

1. The Effects of this Legal Repentance, this Spirit of Bondage, this Conviction of Sin, and

Remorfe for it, are such as these:

First, Sometimes a Bodily and visible Shaking attends the inward Trouble. It is probable that Cain labour'd under this Distemper: For I may produce the Instances both of bad and good Men, whilft I treat of this Subject: For the Legal Repentance may be found even in the worlt Men; and because it proceedeth no further, it is not profitable to their Souls Welfare: But this Repentance, in all those whom God intends to call home to himself, and really to convert, leads directly to Gospel Repentance, and confequently to Eternal Life and Salvation. I may then Instance even in those who were Reprobates; for the Effects and Fruits of Legal Repentance (which I'm now speaking of) are common to them with the truly Godly. The former have it, and are never the better for it; but the latter have it as a Preparative to faving Repentance. It is probable, I fay, that a Bodily Trembling feiz'd upon Cain, when he became a Fugitive and Vagabond on the Earth, flying as it were from his own shadow, imagining that every one that met him would kill him, as he had done his Brother. And it may be this very Trembling and Quaking of Body was that Mark which it is faid God fet upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him, Gen. 4. 15. I only presume to offer this as my Conjecture, that his visible Quaking was to be that Mark and Badge whereby Persons should know him: and indeed it was the due Reward of his horrid Sin. We are certain that Belhazzar was struck with a Trembling Fit by the fight of the Hand-writing on the Wall: The joints of his Loins were loofed, and his Knees B 3

smote one against another, Dan. 5. 6. This strange posture and change of his Body proceeded, I doubt not, from some terrible Conviction on his Spirit, and an apprehension of the Divine Vengeance for his Sins. And Persons of a better Character have found the same, or the like effect, upon themselves; as the Prophet Habakkuk in Chap. 3. 16. My Belly trembled, my Lips quiver'd, rottenness enter'd into my Bones, and I was troubled in my self. It is particularly recorded in the History of St. Paul's Conversion, that he trembling said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Acts 9.6. The Jailer mention'd in the Asts of the Apostles, fell under this Trouble: Upon Paul and Silas's crying out to him, he came trembling, and fell down at their feet, Acts 16. 29. Shivering of Body accompanied his Horror of Conscience.

Secondly, Sometimes terrible Thoughts by night, and affrighting Dreams, are the result of this inward anguish and wounding, Job 7. 14. Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions. And this it is likely the Pfalmist meant in Pfal. 77. 4. Thou holdest mine Eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. My Night-thoughts are so black and dismal that they hinder me from fleeping. To which perhaps may be refer'd those Complaints of his in Pfal. 88. 15. While I suffer thy Terrors, I am distracted: thy fierce Wrath goeth over me : thy Terrors have cut me off. When pleasant Repose and fost Sleep should allay his Thoughts, even then he was diverted from taking his Rest by unquiet and troublesome Reflections on his past Follies, and by the Confideration of the heavy Hand of God which was stretched out against him.

Thirdly, Pain and Torture of Body, Weakness and Sickness, Consumption and Languishment, Outcries,

cries, Groans and Roarings are the difmal effect of an inward Remorfe and Contrition. I will Instance in 70b, whose whole Book indeed might bear the Title of Lamentations; but he seems to sum up all his Griefs and Complaints in that most pathetick Language, Chap. 16. ver. 12. I was at eafe, but he hath broken me afunder: he hathalfo taken me by my Neck, and haken me to pieces, and fet me up for his mark: His arrows compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins afunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground: He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a Giant. Here are Great Words and High Expresfions, but the Anguish of his Soul who utter'd them was far greater. Let us also hear what were the Effects of David's inward Trouble and Remorfe for his Sins. Pfal. 6. 2. My Bones, faith he, are vexed; (the folider and firmer parts of his Body, which were the supporters of the Building, shrunk under the load and pressure of his Sins: no wonder then if other parts droop'd and decay'd: The Windows of the House as well as the Pillars were shatter'd; for he adds,) ver. 7. Mine Eye is consumed because of grief. And afterwards, My life is spent with grief, and my years with fighing: My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are confumed; Pfal, 31, 10. And again, Pfal, 32. 3. My bones wax old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand is heavy upon me: My moisture is turn'd into the drought of summer. But more fully and amply in Pfal. 38. 2, &c. Thine arrows flick fast in me, thine hand presseth me fore: there is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin: My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness; I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning

mourning all the day long; for my loins are filled with a loathfome disease, and there is no soundness in my

flefb.

Methinks the distressed Psalmist behaves himself here (if I may be permitted to make the Comparifon) as some miserable Cripples and Lazars, whom I have seen in the great City of this Nation, who are wont to place themselves in the middle of the Streets, and laying their Crutches by them, they make bare those parts of their Bodies which have been wounded or maim'd, or are over-run with Sores; these they lay open and naked to the Eyes of those that pass by, and at the same time they endeavour with a hideous Cry and Lamentation to extort Pity and Charity from the Beholders. In a refembling manner, this distressed Person exposes and lays open his Wounds, and proclaims the Loathsomness of them, and seems thereby to invite our Pity and Compassion, and at the same time to acquaint us what are the dreadful Effects and Fruits of Sin.

This he doth likewise in the following Verses, 8, 10, 17. I am feeble, and fore broken (faith he), I have roared because of the disquietness of my Mind. My Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me, I am ready All this (and much more which I might to fall. relate to you, and fet before you out of the Book of the Plalms) is the fad effect and consequence of his finning against God, and of the sense of it which he had on his Spirit. But you cannot but observe that he uses one kind of Expression very often, namely, that his Bones are vexed; his Bones are confumed; his Bones wax old; and in another place he complains that his Bones are broken. Which is as much as if he had faid, I am in a very wretched Condition, as long as I lie under the Difpleafure W211 1.18

pleasure of God for my Sins: I am upon the Rack; my Bones are not only disjointed but broken, my own Conscience being the cruel Executioner. Consider then what Pain and Torment the Dislocation and Fracture of the Bones in the Body do produce; that, and much more, do I feel both in

my Soul and Body.

Therefore these two Things are implied and intimated by those Expressions of the Psalmist; first, the extream Pain he suffer'd, which is described by the Scene and Subject of it, the Bones, which are the inmost parts of the Body, and so denote the inwardness of his Grief; and also by the Manner and Degree of it, it is no flight Hurt or Ache, but a breaking of the Bones, which doth well express the exquisiteness of his Torture. He is none of those Beggars that complain without cause, and thew counterfeit Sores. The second thing implied in this Expression, is his exceeding great Weakness and Disability of Body. The Anguish of his Soul had enfeebled his outward Man. Look what Weakness the Fractures and Disjointings in the Body bring; fuch, and much more, doth the Royal Prophet experience to be the attendant of his Spiritual Malady.

And this is no other than what many Servants of God, besides him, have selt to be the Fruit of their Sins. You may hear them roar, and make a dreadful noise, whilst they are under their Spiritual Terrors. How loud and clamorous was the sorrowful weeping Prophet Jeremiah? With how deep an Accent did he breath forth his Lamentations not only for the Afflictions of the Church, but for his own and others Sins, which lay heavy on his Heart, and almost press'd him down? Hear the Complaint of that good King Hezekiah, Isa, 38.

13, 14. As a Lion, so will be break all my Bones: From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me: Like a Crane or a Swallow so did I chatter; I did mourn as a Dove; my Eyes fail with looking upward. The meaning is, his Spiritual Wounding was attended with Bodily Pain and Disorder. The deep sense of his Sins reduced him to extream Pains and

Dolours, even in his outward Man.

But I must add, that there are yet farther Effells, and more horrid Consequences of this inward Remorfe for Sin. Sometimes there is a kind of Despondency in the troubled Soul. Hence you hear the Psalmist crying out after this manner, Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Doth he in anger shut up his tender Mercies? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his Promise fail for evermore? Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Pfal. 77. 7, &c. The poor tormented Sinner is tired out with his Grief and Pain, which produces such a despairing kind of Language as this. He is so cast down and over-whelmed with Sorrow, he is so grievously bruised and broken under the Conviction of Sin, that he almost desponds of Mercy, and concludes that God hath forfaken him. Nay fometimes, but very rarely, the Anguish of God's own Children may be so great that it may invite them to lay violent hands on themselves. This 70b was tempted to, chap. 7. ver. 15. My Soul chooseth strangling, and Death rather than Life. But God suffers not Satan to get the mastery here; he will not let that evil and malicious Spirit so far prevail against his Servants. But as for others, he is pleased sometimes to give them up to Satan, who so urges upon their Consciences the heinousness of their Sins, that they fall into utter and final Despair, and prove their own

Executioners. Achitophel and Judae are two Instances of this kind. But that Terror for Sin, that Spirit of Bondage, that Legal Remorse and Repentance which are in God's Servants, have nothing of this nature accompanying them; for they are intended by God to be wholly for their Good and Advantage, and to be a Preparative (as I have said before) to a Kindly, Saving and Gospel Re-

pentance.

Thus I have briefly represented to you the dismal Consequences of the Sense of Sin, and of God's Wrath due to Sinners for the same. The All-wife God is pleas'd oftentimes to bring Sinners (even fuch as belong to him) very low in their Bodies and outward Man, whilft he is working a Conviaion and Humiliation in their Souls. rows and Sadnesses of God's own Children are very loud and vocal, infomuch that the World takes notice of them. This is the Case frequently of many Persons whom God effectually convinces of their Sins; they are made deeply sensible of their Miscarriages; they know and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that they have forfaken the Lord their God. They are made to groan and lament under their Misdoings; they roar for difquietness of Mind; their Bones are vexed; their whole Body is disorder'd; they have a sharp sense and feeling of their Sins, and of the Anger and Displeasure of the Almighty. To conclude this particular, there can be no better Proof of this than by appealing to the Experience of some sincere Converts and Profelites of Christianity: they will evidence it to be a great Truth by enumerating their repeated acts of Grief and Remorfe, by disclosing the Fears, the Pains, the Anguishes which they have felt, and which no Tongue but their

own, and scarcely that, is able to describe. Having thus finish'd the first thing I undertook, which was to set before you the Effects of Legal Repent-

ance,

2ly, I am to acquaint you what are the Means and Procurers of it. First then, this Preparatory Repentance, this Spirit of Bondage to fear, is wrought in the Soul by the teaching of the Law. You must know then that the Law requires strict and finless Obedience; and when we are guilty of the breach of it, it severely curses and condemns us. Gal. 3. 10. As many as are of the Works of the Law, that is, seek for Justification by it, are under the Curse; for it is written, (namely in Deut. 27. 26.) Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them. Now, this Law, and the Curse attending it, are represented to the Soul; and hence is wrought in it the Spirit of Bondage; the Soul is held under the Terrors of the Law. And as when the Law was given in Mount Sinai, Thunder and Lightning, Smoke and Tempest, and the frightful found of a Trumpet were its attendants; so is it also now when the Law is urg'd upon, and feverely fet before the Sinner: he is fill'd with horror and amazement, with most dreadful thoughts and apprehensions: Claps of Thunder and flashes of Lightning, in the most unusual manner, cannot be fo affrighting to him. The Sinner trembles at the Threats and Menaces which are contain'd in the Law, and then firially looking into himself, and examining his Heart and Life, he is by the Grace of God disposed to a more genuine and kindly Repentance afterwards.

Again, this Preparatory Repentance is wrought in Sinners by the Astual Execution of God's Judg-

ments on them. The Curies of the Law come to be really felt. God lays his Hand on the Sinner, he exercises him with some Adverse and Afflictive Condition. He takes from him some of the Blef-sings of this Life, and in the room thereof sends Crosses, Disappointments and Calamities. The All-wise God designs by these to begin and set on foot a Remorse in the Souls of Men; for he knows that this is an useful Method to rouze their stupid Minds, to bring them to a sense of their past Folly. It is his Pleasure that the first Essays of Repentance should commence after this manner.

Yea, all Occasional Acts of Providence which are observ'd in the World, are intended to this very purpose. I will give an Instance or two. In 1 Sam. 12. 18, 19. we cannot but take notice that upon God's fending of Thunder and Rain a whole Day together, the People of Ifrael, who before were harden'd in their Sins, began to be mollified: this fignal act of Providence wonderfully affected them, all the People greatly feared the Lord and Samuel, and (as the next Verse informs us) they became sensible of that particular Sin which God was angry with them for. An Instance of the like nature we have in Ezra 10 9. All the Men of Judah and Benjamin gather'd themselves together unto Ferusalem, and all the people sat in the street of the House of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great Rain. Ezra call'd them together to fet before them the Sins they had been guilty of fince their return from the Captivity; and it feem'd good to the Divine Providence, at that very season and juncture, to send a great and unusual Rain, whereby (as it appears) their Hearts were softned and melted. That particular Occurrence happening at that time when they were

in a solemn manner assembled together, had a great Influence upon them; they fell a trembling at this frightful Accident, and this made way for a more compleat Repentance and Reformation, as we may fee in that Chapter. I might produce here the Instance and Example of the Jailer before mentioned; God made the sudden and great Earthquake, which shook the Prison, and broke open its doors, to be an occasion contributing toward his Conversion. That particular act of Providence which carried Terror and Danger with it, was ferviceable to remind him of his Guilt, and of the Divine Vengeance due to him for his Offences. That Concussion which shaked the Foundations of the Prison, did also stir and move him, and caus'd him to quake as well as the adjoining Earth. This was, I fay, an occasion of his trembling, mention'd ver. 29. and of his affectionate applying himself to the Servants of Jesus, and receiving the Words of Eternal Life both for himself and his Family. Thus you fee by what means the Legal Remorfe is wrought in the Hearts of Men, namely, by the Preaching of the Law; by the dreadful Denunciations of Punishments and Judgments; by the actual inflicting of those Judgments, and by all occasional exertments of Providence in the World, when it shall feem good to the All-wife Being to let them have an effectual Influence on Mens Souls. For this must be added to what hath been faid, that this Legal Repentance is wrought by the Operation of the Holy Ghoft, and is made a faving A& by the Divine Power influencing on the Heart.

Measures of this Legal Repentance. It is sufficiently evident from the Premises, that the Spirit of Bondage is frequently the forerunner of Evange-

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lical Repentance; but then it must be said, that the Measure of it is not alike in all Persons. In some it continues long, in others but a short time. In some it is sharp and vehement, in others it is gentle and moderate. This then is a fafe Propofition, That tho' all Converts are humbled alike, as to the Truth and Reality of their Humiliation and Remorfe, yet they are not alike as to the Degrees of it. All are so far humbled, bruised and broken, that they see and feel the Bitterness of Sin; yet as to the particular Manner and Meafure of this fight and feeling of Sin, these are not the same, but very different in those that are truly Penitent; nor doth it work the like effects on all, for some of them are more open and in the view of the World, others are more fecret, and yet perhaps not less violent. Paul's Conversion was visible and conspicuous, and in the face of the Sun; for he was struck down at noon-day; he was dismounted in his full career, when he was breathing out the hottest Persecutions against the Saints; he was allarm'd by a Voice from Heaven; an extraordinary Light was darted upon him, and even blinded him : So the Failer was furprized with a fudden and unufual Light, and feveral otherstrange and uncommon Circumstances attended his Conversion, so that it could not but be apparent and visible. And there are innumerable Examples of this kind. But then it is as certain that the Conversion of others is secret and private, still and quiet, and not attended with any such Circumstances. I will briefly then enquire how the difference happens; and you may take it in these two Particulars.

First, The Spirit of Bondage, and those Terrors and Anguishes which attend upon it, are to

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be observ'd and found in those Converts generally who have been great and notorious Sinners, and have continued a confiderable time in their evil Practices. When these Persons turn to God, their Repentance is fignal, their Griefs and Terrors are usually very remarkable, and they feel more Dread and Remorfe than others. Those who have been extreamly Wicked, and have been great Oppofers and Enemies of all Goodness, are not reclaim'd and reduced after the fame manner that those Perfons are who were never guilty of fuch vile Enormities and Impieties. Manasses, in the Old Testament is an Instance of this. He had fin'd with a high hand, and therefore was as fignal and eminent in his Return to God, as you may read in 2 Chron. 33. 12, Oc. In the New Testament Zacheus may be an Instance; he had been an Arch-Publican, as St. Luke stiles him, chap. 19. ver. 2. one of the chiefest Sinners of that scandalous Employment; and we may gather, that the Sense of his Sin, and his Remorfe for it, was extraordinary, because the Restitution which he made was fuch; he made known his Conversion by remarkable Signs, he freely offer'd to restore four-fold, ver. 8. where he had done Wrong to any; yea, the half of his Goods he gave to the Poor. This intimates that his Sense of his former Miscarriages was very sharp, and accompanied with great Anguish and Remorse. Mary Magdalen was another Example; she had been a great and infamous Sinner, and accordingly when she was convinced of it, her Sorrow bore some proportion to her Sin: She even washed Christ's Feet with her Tears; which lets us know that she had an extraordinary Remorfe for her former lewd Courfes. But Paul was the most remarkable Example of all of this

kind, and therefore our Church takes particular notice of his Conversion, and solemnly commemorates it on a certain Day. Thus after a very vicious, prophane and scandalous Life, Conversion is generally very Eminent and Exemplary. And not only as to others, that is, those who behold these Converts, but as to themselves also, their Conversion is plainly Discernable, the Change must

needs be Sensible and Palpable.

Secondly, This also happens when God intends to make some Persons the great and notable Instruments of his Glory in the World. Thus it was in fome of those forenamed Instances, but especially in St. Paul, who was a chosen Vessel, to bear God's Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel, Acts 9. 15. That is the Account given of his wonderful Conversion. When God defigns this, he generally prepares Persons for it by a more than ordinary Regret and Conviction. When he intends to Exalt them in a fingular manner, he is pleas'd first to humble them; he lays their Foundation low, because he purposes it shall bear a great weight. And this Humbling is necessary on this account, that they may not afterwards be puffed up with Pride, when it shall feem good to Providence to make them in a more than ordinary way serviceable to the Church of Christ, and to the welfare of Souls. The Foundation is laid deep, almost in Hell, that the Superstructure may be rais'd to the greatest height, even to the Third Heaven, as it fared with St. Paul.

Thus we see upon what Accounts some Men's Recovery and Conversion are very visible and remarkable: But it is not so in other Persons, viz. such who have been free from all notorious Sins, and whose Education hath been Religious and

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Holy. Here God is pleased usually to instill Grace by degrees, and they need not look for such visible Signs and Fruits as I spoke of before. Some are early Christians: from their Childhood they are train'd up to Goodness, and they are insensibly brought to a liking of the ways of Holiness. By the help of a pious Education they have escaped the Pollutions which are in the World through Lust.

Here then you may resolve that Question, Whether every Man and Woman that is Converted, doth certainly know the punctual time when they were Converted? The Answer is, That this is known by some, but not by all; for some Persons are sanctified from their Insancy, and Grace and Holiness grew up in their Souls by degrees; and repeated and continued Acts made a habit at last. Such Persons as these cannot discern the Progress they have made, they cannot acquaint you when and how it advanced. The Motion was imperceptible, and the Change undiscernable. Now, in these Persons 'tis certain, that Conversion is different from what it is in those before spoken of.

It is acknowledged in Philosophy, that the Soul disperseth Life and Spirits through the Body when we are asleep, and when we know nothing of it. So the Holy Spirit can and doth sometimes secretly operate in renewing the Soul, and insusing Spiritual Life into it, though we are in a manner Ignorant of it. What is done by degrees is not so easily perceived, as that which is done in an Instant. Now I have already suggested, that Regeneration and Conversion in some Persons is gradual, and not compleat at once: hence there is an insensible Progress of Grace; a Believer may neither know the time nor manner of his Conversion.

This is grounded upon what I said, that Conversion may be wrought by little and little in some Persons. It advanceth by due and certain Steps: and consequently many true Converts may not be sensible of it.

Grace is so weak and faint at first in some, that they can hardly discover it, hardly discern any change made in them, it being in a very low degree. And therefore it is not to be expected that they should know and tell the exact Time, the precise Day or Hour of their being converted. There may be, and often is a time when some feel unufual Impressions and Impulses upon their Hearts, but this is a poor sign of Conversion. He that Reads the Holy Word of God with understanding, and hath a true sense of Religion, and a Renovation by the Spirit, knows that it is not a short transitory Change either in Heart or Life, but is something of another Nature, a lasting and permanent Change, a change of the whole Mind and Manners, which requires confiderable time, I mean ordinarily, for as to extraordinary Operations of the Spirit, we must not make use of them as Arguments here. A Christian's Life is a continual Conversion unto God, a daily conflicting and combating with his finful Nature, a perpetual striving against Satan, an incessant looking up to God, and imploring his Help, and his Pardon, and a deriving Strength from Jesus by a lively Faith, and a constant growing in Grace, and aspiring after Gospel-Perfection. This is the best sign of True Conversion, and I do not find that the other, viz. the affigning the just and punctual Æra of our Converfion, is mention'd in Scripture as a Mark of it.

Yea, I rather think that those Texts which speak of the secret and undiscernable Power of the Spirit on Men's Hearts sometimes, and the insensi-

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ble Efficacy of God's Word and Grace, direct us to a contrary Sentiment. So is the Kingdom of God, faith our Saviour, as if a Man sould cast Seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rife night and day, and the Seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how, Mark 4. 26. If the springing and growing up of the Immortal Seed in Mens Hearts be not known, then neither may the first casting of the Seed into Mens Hearts be discerned. However, the very precise time of it may not be known, and confequently they can't tell the just Epoche of their Conversion. Thus it is with fome Persons. But not withstanding this, there are daily Examples of another Nature: The work of Conversion is begun with some fense and feeling, I say with some sense; for it is not alike in all.

And particularly with respect to this treparatory Repentance which I am now speaking of, the Spirit works not the same Terrors and Troubles in all Persons. The degrees of Legal Repentance are not This ought to be considered by those who equal. are suspicious of themselves, and doubt whether they are true Converts, because they have not felt those Pangs and Throws, those Terrors and Anguishes which others have had experience of. fay unto thee who thus doubtest, Question not the Truth of thy Repentance and Conversion because thou hast not the same measure of Trouble and Affrightment which some have had for their Sins: But know this, that there is an immoderate Sorrow for Sin. This you will find to be clear from those Words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 2. 7. The Excommunicate Person, a very great Sinner, was to be taken again into the Church, and to be restored with meekness and gentleness, left he should be Swakowed up with over-much Sorrow. There is wer-00/2004

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wolfes winn, an Overplus, an Excess of Grief and Anguish for Sin; and this the Apostle cautions against. The Devil would tempt us to be Excessive in Mourning for our Sins, and fo destroy us that way. He would lead us to despair and utter desponding. Be not follicitous then to try thy Repentance by the measures and degrees of those Terrors which are wont fometimes to go along with it, but rather try thy Conversion and Repentance by the Sincerity and Reality of that Sorrow thou feelest. It may feem good to the Almighty Sovereign to exempt thee from grievous Pains and bitter Agonies which many Converts have gone through. Wherefore Judge not thy felf on this Account, but rather be Thankful that thou art permitted to arrive to a Gospel Repentance, without the previous severities of a Legal one. And forget not to pity those who have met with a more sharp Usage, who have roared and cried under the burden of their Sins, who have bemoaned themfelves with most dreadful Lamentations, who have been uneasy and restless both in their Souls and Bodies, and have been Tormented with unspeakable Anguish as often as they represented their past Sins to their thoughts.

4/y, It will be time now to hasten to the next thing I mention'd, and that is to let you see what are the Reasons of this sad Dispensation, and why Legal Repentance and the Spirit of Bondage are the Forerunners of Gospel Repentance: What is the Reason that God's precious Servants are so serverely dealt with? Why do they lie under such Terrors and Tortures? I Answer, This sivesold Account may be given of it. It is thus: 1. In respect of God's Appointment. 2. His Glory and Attributes. 3. In regard of our Conformity to

Christ. 4. By reason of the Malice of Satan. 5. Because of our selves, and of the Nature of the

thing it felf.

First, I fay, 'tis the Appointment of Heaven; it is the Divine Will and Pleasure, that when with rebukes be corrects Man for iniquity, he should make his Beauty to confume away like a Moth, Pfal. 39. 11. In another sense than David intended, it is true, that to the Righteons there ariseth light out of darkness; the godly Man's Joy must be produced after Sorrow. This goes before that and makes way for it. God pours not the Oil of Mercy but into a broken Veffel, saith a devout Father. There is no comfort administred but to the humbled and broken Souls. That this is the Divine Order and Appointment, is manifest from innumerable Passages in the Sacred Writings. To this Man will I look, faith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word, Ifa. 66. 2. Again, the fame Evangelical Prophet, chap. 61. v. 1, &c. The Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings to the meek (or humble, for the Original Word fignifies both) he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them-beauty for ashes, the Oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Which very Text our Saviour himself took to Preach upon, as you read in Luke 4. 17. and he let his Auditors know that this Scripture was fulfilled in their Ears (as you read in the next verse) that he was the Person who came to comfort and relieve Sinners; but this Comfort could not be imparted to them, unless they were first cast down in the Sense of their Sins. a Preparative to that. As 'tis said of John the Baptist, that he was to make ready a People prepared for the Lord, Luke 1. 17. And this making ready

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and preparing, was by Preaching Repentance, by humbling them under a deep Sense of their Sins. John the Baptist was our Saviour's Forerunner before he came: And our Saviour hath also a Forerunner in Mens Hearts: There is a Preparative there before he enters, and that is Legal Repentance. That proves to be the voice of one crying in the Wilderness: The Soul is led into the Desart: Trouble and Anguish wait upon it. Fear and Bondage are Christ's Harbingers in every true Penitent.

You may observe to this purpose, what is set in the front of the Beatitudes, Bleffed are they that Mourn; Blessed are the Poor in Spirit: Spiritual Mourning and Poverty of Spirit are precedent qualifications of Blessedness. And this is it which our Saviour intends by those Words in Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. You must labour and sweat under your heavy Load, before you can have it taken off, before you can be eas'd and reliev'd. And this is the Method which St. James points out to us, chap. 4. v. 9, 10. Be afflicted and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness: humble your selves in the fight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. You see that great Mourning and Humiliation are the Forerunners of Joy and Exaltation. This, I fay, is that Method which the God of Heaven is pleased to make use of in the restoring of Sinners; he humbles them before he exalts them; he fills their Souls with Terrors and Affrightments, with Anguish and Astonishment, before he bestows on them the Joys and Ravishments of his Spirit of Grace: He casts them down under the sense and apprehension of their Misery, before he lets them have the Joy-

ous Experience of his Mercy: He leads them to a fure and steady Hope by a kind of Despair; he conducts them to Heaven and Happiness by the gates of Hell, and the confines of Everlasting burnings. He first fets their Sins in order before them, and musters up all their Follies and Miscarriages, their forgetfulness of the God that made them, their unthankfulness and disobedience to the Blesfed and Merciful Jesus who came to redeem them, their voluntary and premeditate opposing, grieving and quenching the Spirit: He spreads before them all the Curfes which the Law pronounces against them, all the Judgments and Punishments which their repeated Sins have deferved. Then he inables them to reflect feriously on these things, and to bewail their unworthiness, and to be forry for their misdoings, and with humble and contrite Hearts to beg Pardon and Forgiveness. Then is the door of Hope fet wide open, and the bleffed and undivided Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, agree to administer Joys and Refreshments to the Penitent Soul. And now the bitterness of former Sorrows is forgotten and worn away by a more sweet and pleasant relish of Divine Joys, which now pervade the Soul, and are transfuled through all its faculties. This is the way of God's Proceeding with his Servants; this is the Divine Appointment which they ought to acquiesce in.

Secondly, I am to shew you likewise, that this is worthy of God, because hereby he advanceth his own Glory, and more especially the Glory of those Eminent Attributes, viz. His Power, Justice, and Mercy. First, his Power is exalted by our low Estate and Humiliation. His Strength is made perfect (that is, 'tis declar'd to be so) by our Weakness and Instrmity. When the Sinner is struck down,

down, and is left to himself, and is forc'd to grapple with his own corrupt Nature, and with the Wrath of the Almighty, and likewise with the Malice of Satan, he will be convinc'd at length of the Power and Soveraignty of the Great Jehovah, and he will be throughly perswaded that he ruleth over ail, and that his Will and Pleasure must take

place in the World.

Again, God's Justice and Righteousness are Exalted by this means. For now it shall be manifesred that Sin shall not go unpunish'd, yea, that Sinners shall punish themselves, and that Sin shall be it owns Torment. Indeed it would be strange and wonderful if it should be otherwise, if Sin should not prove a Punishment, if regret and uneasiness were not the effects of end doing, and the just Recompence of it. Besides, the Justice of God is more particularly feen in this, that as Men have fin'd in their Bodies, fo they shall suffer in their Bodies. Seeing the Soul and Body are oftentimes Partners in Sinning, is it not just and equal that they should be Sharers in the Punishment, that the outward Man (as well as the inward one) should be afflicted and tormented for Sin?

Again, God's Mercy is concern'd in this affair; for it is sometimes necessary for the real good of his Servants, that it should be thus. For some are of that Temper that they will not be reform'd till they are throughly humbled and brought low: They will not entirely forsake their Sins, nor hate them perfectly, and look upon them as the greatest evil in the World, unless they be first broken and bruis'd, unless they have felt the Spirit of Bondage in a great measure, and have been as 'twere scared out of their Sins, and Storm'd out of their strong Holds: See you not how loth a Man is to part with a Limb,

to have a Member of his Body cut off? The thoughts of this strikes Terror into him, and he can't be perswaded to have a Joint divided from him as long as he is alive: But when the Man of Art comes and tells him, that his Life is in extream hazard, yea, that he must certainly die and perish if he will not submit to have that Gangren'd Limb cut off, and therefore earnestly requests him not to dally, but immediately to suffer that Operation, lest it be too late; hereupon he forthwith takes up other thoughts, and resolves to venture himself into the Hands of the Artist; he is content to lose a Limb, yea, more than one, rather than lose his Life. In like manner, the Sense of the Danger, the Death, the Damnation, which a Sinner incurs by keeping his Sins, makes am willing to part with them, to cast them from him, and utterly abandon them : He submits to the severest Discipline, to the most painful Surgery (if I may so call it) that he may prevent the more exquisite Pains and Torture hereafter. We fee that oftentimes Sinners, by those dismal Fears and Apprehensions, are brought to fuch a Sight and Sense of their evil ways, that they wholly renounce them, and are firmly resolved not to return to them again.

Thus it is, that till a Man be Spiritually Poor, he will not apprehend what are the true Riches: 'Till he is Miserable and Wretched in his own Eyes, he will not seek out for Happiness, he will not see the necessity of a Saviour and Deliverer. Those that think themselves whole and sound will not be perswaded to repair to the Physician; they will not request his Aid and Help if they have no Sense of Sickness and Illness. The Israelites of old would not have look'd up to the Brazen Serpent, unless they had felt themselves stung with the siery

ones. The Prodigal Son would have continued still in his mad Ramble, and would not have return'd Home, and yisited his Father's threshold. if his Scarcity and Penury had not brought him back. It was this that made him fall at his Fathers Feet, and bewail his former Folly, and become a new Man. It is the Rack and excessive Torture that makes the Malefactor confess his Crime. So it is here, the Legal Terrors and Torments which God afflicts some Persons with, the extraordinary Pain and Anguish they lie under, extort from them an acknowledgment of their Sins: then they cry Guilty, then they are ready to pass the Sentence against themselves; and if God did not prevent and restrain them, sometimes they would be their own Executioners. But God doth interpose for the welfare of his Servants, and mitigates their Pain and Torment, and checks the excessiveness of their Grief and Anguish. But yet he is pleased, even from a great and unspeakable Love to them, to let them lie under some Terrors and Pangs of Conscience.

It is Mercy to deal with them thus. Some Sinners would not be brought off from their evil Practices without this: they would not come to Christ unless they were used thus. The Manslayer would not fly to the City of Refuge, if the Avenger of Blood did not pursue him. Do you not remember that Lot was pull'd away by force out of Sodom, and that otherwise he would not have left it? Sinners are as unwilling and backward to relinquish their Sins. They must even be forced out of them: And this oftentimes is done by those Legal Terrors which I have spoken of. They shall know the Greatness and Odiousness of Sin by feeling the Punishment of it in their own Breasts.

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And here now I must let you see more particularly, how this Method which God uses is for our Humiliation, and confequently for our Good and Advantage. He deals thus with us to shew us what we are, and to cure our high Conceit of our felves: He doth hereby tame rebellious Sinners, he breaks their Spirits, he crops their Pride, he makes them tractable, and easy to be led and ruled. When he hath brought them Low, then Mercy is welcome to them, then they accept of it with Thankfulness. This is well fet forth to us in that Parable (Mat. 18. 23, Oc.) of a King or great Lord, who finding his Servant to be in arrear no less than Ten thoufand Talents, he fell upon him with great feveritv. and commanded him, and his Wife and Children, and all that he had, to be Sold, that Payment might be made, that the Debt might be discharg'd. To what End was this? It was to make him apprehensive of his gross and notorious Miscarriages, it was to strike into him a deep Sense of his evil doings, that he might Repent, heartily Repent, and find Mercy. And this was the Effect of his Lord's sharp Demeanor toward him, for he fell prostrate at his Feet, and Worshipped him, and begg'd his Patience and Forbearance. This is eafily applied. And thus in respect of God, and his Glory and Attributes, it is very accountable that Legal Repentance should go before that which is Evangelical.

The Second Reason which I offer'd, was this, That we might be made Conformable to Christ. Therefore it is that so many Servants of God are humbled and debased, and are Afflicted both in their inward and outward Man, before they are made partakers of the Divine Favour and Mercy. The Apostle tells us, that the Saints are Prede-

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stinated to be conformable to the Image of Christ, Rom. 8. 29. and to his Death, Phil. 3. 10. It is the Divine Pleasure that they shall be made like unto him, even as to his Sorrows and Sufferings. The Prophet foretold, Isa. 53. 3. that Christ should be a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; yea, Mat. 26. 38. His Soul was forrowful even unto Death. His dreadful Groans on the Cross were so great that they shook the Earth, and set it into a quavering Fit; they rent the Vail of the Temple, and tore up by main force the Graves and Sepulchres. And when it shall be remember'd by you (and how indeed is it possible you should forget it?) that he cried out upon the Cross with a most astonishing Voice, My God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? You have enough to perswade you that he was the Subject of Infinite Sorrow and Anguish. Isa. 53. 5. He was smitten of God and afflicted, he was wounded for our Transgressions: As he bore the Sins of Men, fo he underwent the Sufferings which were due to them. It is fitting therefore that those who partake of the Divine Favour, should first be acquainted in some measure with those Horrors and Pains which Christ felt on the Cross. By this means they shall have an experimental Tast of God's Goodness and Christ's Love to them: and this being mix'd with their Troubles and Sorrows will induce them to fly to Jesus, and to abandon their Sins, even out of a Principle of Ingenuity and Gratitude.

But thirdly, I might shew you that those Terrors and Troubles, especially when they are Excessive, happen by the Malice of Satan, whose Design and Plot it is to disturb God's Elect, to put into their Heads dark and despairing Thoughts, to over-run them with Melancholly, and to make

their whole Lives Comfortless and Dismal. He goes about like a roaring Lion, feeking whom he may devour; and this is one way whereby he destroys many: His Roaring makes them do fo too, i. e. it fills them with hideous Out-cries and Complaints, which are caused by those Affrightments which he creates in them, and which he intends should drive them to Despair. Hence it is that we oftentimes see poor distressed Souls over-whelmed with Grief for their Sins. They are surrounded with thick and dark Clouds, and in those Clouds are contain'd Thunder and Tempest, the noise and violence whereof fcare and diffract them. Who will wonder at this, that shall consider what an Enemy they have, how Industrious and Zealous he is to Destroy them? He can't work their Ruin by making them continue in their Sins, and delight in them; he takes another Course, he endeavours to destroy them by plunging them into despair: He Represents their former Sins to them in the most horrid Circumstances, and with the most affrighting Aggravations: And hereby he fills their Souls with Dread and Horror. He lovesto raise Storms: herein he acts like himfelf. This is the product of his implacable Spight and Malice.

Fourthly, and lastly, It is so, and must be so if we consider our selves, and the Make and Frame of mortal Men, with the nature of the thing it self, and the necessity of it. Those Effects of Legal Repentance happen to them according to the natural Disposition of Mankind, that is, the Union of Soul and Body. There is so near a Connection between these two, they are tied so fast, they are coupled so close that thence there must needs proceed those strange Disorders and Disturbances in some Penitents. The Soul affects the Body: That sear

and grief which possess the former, visibly diffurb the latter. These troublesome Passions discompose the frame and crasis of the Body; and hence it is that many Converts are seized with bodily Pains, they are fick and crazy, they pine away and are emaciated; they look like mere Skeletons, and affright others as well as themselves. For the Spirit preys upon the Flesh, the Soul injures the Body, the Sword cuts the Scabbard. Or if you please, let me express it thus, The Active and Fiery Evaporations of mental Grief and Sorrow have broke through the Cloud of the Body, and thence it is that you hear fuch Thunderclaps, fuch loud and roaring Accents of Passion. It must be thus by reason of the Sympathy between the Corporal and Spiritual part of Man: because these two are blended together in his Nature, and reciprocally work upon one another. It was elegantly faid of the Wife Man, Prov. 17. 22. A merry Heart, that is, a good and quiet Conscience, doth good like a Medicine; but a broken Spirit, that is, the Spirit which I have describ'd to you, the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, dries the Bones, that is, it hath no small influence on the Body, it drinks up its natural Moisture, it robs it of its hale Complexion. it brings Pains and Diseases, it causes troublesome Days and reftless Nights, and is attended with a Diforder of the whole Man.

Again, let the Necessity of the thing be consider'd. It is sometimes absolutely requisite (as I have before suggested) that Bodily Affliction should be added to that of the Mind, in order to the Sinner's being Reclaim'd. This Method is become as necessary as administring of Physick is for the restoring of Health; as necessary as digging and laying the Foundation is before the Erecting of the Build-

Building: as necessary as Searching a Wound is deem'd to be in order to the due Healing of it : as necessary as Plowing the Ground is before the Seed be cast in: so necessary is Legal Repentance in some Persons, before a true Gospel Sorrow be infused into them: so necessary are Internal and External Griefs proceeding from the Spirit of Bondage before a more kindly and genuine Remorfe be created in the Soul. What think you? Did not the Israelites Travels thro' a howling Wilderness make Canaan more welcome to those of them who attain'd to it? In a refembling manner we cannot sufficiently prize Christ and his Benefits unless we were first under the Spirit of Bondage and Servitude, and had been in the Defart, in a defolate and forlorn Condition. Affectionate Mothers are wont to Love their Children the more because of their undergoing great Pains and Pangs for them. When Christ hath cost us dear, and hath been formed in us with unufual Labour, he will be truly Precious to us, then we shall value him at an unspeakable rate, then he will be the chiefest of Ten thousand.

I have granted already, that the God convinces all Men whom he intends to Convert, yet these Convictions are not alike in all Men. The same Measure of Legal Terrors is not necessary for every one. But for some Persons a certain measure of them is absolutely necessary, as I have shew'd you. The Tree that hath stood a long time, and is of great growth, is not easily pluck'd up. Some Sins are not to be eradicated out of Mens Hearts and Lives without very great difficulty: And therefore in this Case it is needful that severe and harsh Methods be made use of, that the Axe be laid to the Root of the Tree, that the Sinner be deeply wounded.

wounded, forely stung, very much bruised, and grievously terrified: And thus you see what Reasons may be given why God is pleased to shew great Severity towards some Converts, and therein to distinguish them from others, who are no less the Favourites of Heaven. This, as you have heard, is in order to excellent Ends and Purposes.

I proceed now to the Application of all. And the Inferences which flow from this Subject which I have been treating of, are such as these: 1. Examine your selves whether you have had any Experimental Knowledge of this Legal Repentance.
2. If you have, do not judge and censure your selves, but bless God for it rather.
3. Judge not others, whom you see lying under these Legal Terrors.
4. From this severe Dispensation of Heaven learn to hate Sin.
5. All Persons should provide

for a Day of Tryal.

First, I say, examine your selves as to this confiderable matter which I have been discoursing of. Ask your felves whether you have felt that Anguish and Remorfe of Soul which is usually the Forerunner of a more Genuine and Godly Sorrow. Have I not made it evident to you, that every. Soul must be first humbled and cast down before it is exalted? It must feel the heavy Burden and Weight of Sin before it find Rest and Ease. It is true, there are different Degrees of Legal Sorrow, and all Persons have not the same Portion of it; but it is to be fear'd that those who never had Experience of this Legal Sorrow, in some measure, are not fitted and prepar'd for Evangelical Repentance, and for the Mercy and Pardon of the Almighty, which follows it. The generality of Converts have been acquainted with this Order and

and Method, in some degree. Compunction and Contrition, and a deep Sense of Sin, and of the Wrath of God for it, are the ground-work of Conversion and Reformation of Life. Examine your felves then as to this particular; ask your felves whether you have known what a broken and contrite Heart is, and whether you have been press'd under the load of your Sins. I have represented this to you as a necessary Preparative to Evangelical Repentance, as an indispensable Forerunner of true Godly Sorrow of Heart, and fincere Amendment of Life. Therefore you can't but be fensible how greatly you are concern'd to Examine your Condition, and to be well acquainted with And if you find that you are wholly void of those bitter Resentments which I have been speaking of, I advise you to use those Means whereby a lively Sense and Sight of your evil ways may be produced in you. And to this purpose you ought to attend to the Ministers of the Gospel, when they fet before you the Terrors and Punishments, the deplorable Recompense and evil Consequences of Sin. Listen to them when they inform you of the horrid Fruits which accompany the Transgression of Divine Laws. Those of you especially who are yet in your Sins, and know not what Conversion is, ought to hearken with all attention and concernedness to their Dolorous Language, to mind their Affectionate Invectives against Sin, to observe their Pathetick Representations of God's Wrath and Vengeance to Sinners. And when their work is at an end, do you begin yours; that is, in your secret Retirements set the Justice and Severity of God before your Eyes, and entertain them constantly in your Thoughts. Consider that Sin shall not go unpunish'd, that Wrath and Vengeance follow the breach of God's Laws, and that tho' you escape Punishment in this Life, yet there is no possibility of avoiding the Torments of Hell, and those Everlasting Burnings. Think what Miseries you expose your selves to; seriously meditate with your felves, what unspeakable Dangers you run into, how wretched and forlorn Creatures you are like to be in a short time, if your Hearts and Lives be not reform'd. Such thoughts as these are serviceable to create Fear and Dread in you; and these, by the Divine Concurrence, will cause you to be uneasy under the heavy load and pressure of your Sins: And thus you will be prepar'd for that more kindly and godly Repentance which I shall speak of afterwards. Thus much for the first Inference, which supposed that some of you had not felt this Spirit of Bondage and

Legal Affrightments.

But if any of you after Examination have found these Terrors in you, forget not to make good use For though it is true some of those dismal Fruits and Effects of this Conviction and Sorrow, are by no means to be wished for by us; fuch as those which I mention'd before, viz. Tremblings of Body, Pains and Tortures, Sicknesses, and Diseases, and even Despair, but rather we are to return Thanks to God, that he was pleased to free us from those; yet it is matter of Thanksgiving, that we have had some experience of that which I call an Entrance or Preparation to true Repentance: Namely, a thorough Feeling of the Guilt of Sin, a deep Sense of the Wrath of God which attends it, and (as the happy consequent of this) a continual Fear of Sinning, and of Offending God, who is a Confuming Fire. We may be heartily thankful that we have attained thus far.

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If you look abroad in the World, you'll find few that have reach'd hither. Do you not see that Sin is not fo much as taken notice of by the generality of Men? They have no Convictions on their Spirits. They know not what a Sight and Sense of Sin are. These are Riddles and Mysteries to them. They verify those Words in 70b 11. 12. Man is like a wild Affes Colt, he knows no restraints; he runs extravagantly in pursuit of his own Defires, he is heady and fearlefs, he looks not back to what he hath done, and he casts not his Eyes forward to what shall befal him. The greatest Numbers of Men may lay claim to that Character which is given a Sort of Men spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah, Chap. 28. 15. They have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell are they at agreement : When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto them, they say: for they have made Lies their refuge, and under Fallhood have they hid themselves. That is, they cheat and delude themselves most wilfully, and that in a thing which nearly concerns them: They have as it were made a Compact with Death, that it shall not approach them, or if it doth, that they shall not be the worse for it: And as for that which follows Death, namely, Hell, they have made a League with that also; they flatter themselves, that they shall never come thither Or rather indeed they perswade themfelves that there is no fuch thing: Hell-fire is but a Scare-crow; and when they speak freely, they add, that Religion is but a Fable, and mere Invention. It is a fad and deplorable Truth, that most Men live as without God in the World, they make no Conscience of their ways, they indulge themselves in all manner of Vice and Exorbitancy, and yet they live Merrily, and feem to pass

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their Days with a vast deal of Content and Pleafure. Hence perhaps some may be enclin'd to think that God is not so Terrible as he is Reprefented, and to fall into his Hands is not so Fearful and Dangerous as it is faid to be. And 'tis likely they are of Opinion, that those Fits of Terror, and Troubles of Conscience, which they obferve in some Men, happen only to such as are of

a Lumpish and Melanchelick Disposition.

Yea, but I say, it were happy for these Merry and Sanguine Sinners, who have this Fancy in their Heads; it were thrice happy for them, if they were tempted with some of this Melancholy (if it must be call'd so). There were some hopes of their condition if in their full carier of Sin and excess of Riot they were check'd and curb'd, humbled and debased, brought into a Mourning Posture. But it is a grand Mistake and Delusion in the World, that Religious Men are the only Dull and Melancholick People. To speak truly and plainly, Impenitent Sinners, and fuch as forget God and their Duty, and are not sensible of their Sins, and of the Divine Vengeance, are the dull and lumpish Folks: these are the heavy and sottish Heads: these are the sensless and stupid Perfons. Why? Because these Men take no notice of any thing of worth, they regard not the direful Consequences of Sinning against God, they have no sense of another World, they care not for their Immortal Souls. The Holy Scripture admirably expresses this want of Sense and Feeling, by calling them dead Men, and dead in Sin, Eph. 2. 1. Col 5. 2, 13. They are concern'd for nothing that is done: they are wholly neglectful of that which should be the main entertainment of their thoughts. Now, are these Persons the better because they are D 3

thus disposed, because they have no Sense of their present or future State? Certainly this is it which makes their State wretched and miserable, that they are so sensels and stupid. This is an undeniable Symptom of their Ruin and Destruction. But happy are those Souls whom God awakens and rouses, whose Eyes are opened, whose Hearts are softned, and whose Consciences are convinced, and who are able to see and apprehend their Sin

and Danger.

And I defire you to think of this feriously, that if the Recovering and Restoring of Sinners be so painful, so grievous, so difficult, and accompanied with fuch Terrors and Anguishes as you have heard, how grievous and horrid will the final State of Sin be to them whom God leaves to themselves? If the Conscience awakened in this Life be so Terrible, what will it be in the next, when it fees that all hopes of recovery are gone? Certainly if Sin be so bitter to the humble and godly Penitent here, it will be Ten thousand times bitterer to the Obstinate Sinner hereafter. If it be thus with the green Tree, as St. James Speaks, what will it be in the dry? If the Judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If God deals fo sharply and severely with his own Servants, how fevere and rigorous will his dealings be towards Impenitent and Reprobate Sinners? Let this fink deep into your Minds, and you will thereby be inabled to Answer the Cavils and Objections of foolish Sinners.

My second Inference from the Premises is this, Take heed of Judging thy self, and Censuring thy State. Have many of God's chosen Servants roared under their Cross? Did Job, David, Hezekiah, and other good Men; nay, did even Christ him-

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felf cry out under the burden of Sin (though he had only Sin imputed to him, but the others had a real guilt of their own) then do not thou conclude peremptorily that thou art rejected of God, and that thou half no title and claim to his Mercy because thou seelest Terrors in thy Breast for thy Sins, because the Arrows of God stick fast in thee, because thou walkest in darkness and seest no light. But do not cast away thy Anchor in the midst of this Rough Sea, and loud Storms and Tempests. Hope still in God, depend upon him: this Cloud may in a short time blow over, and then Light, and Joy, and Serenity, will succeed in its Room, and thy Mouth shall be fill'd with the Praises of the

most High.

Thirdly, as you must not rashly Judge your selves and your own Condition, so neither must you unadvisedly Judge and Censure others, because you fee them fad and pensive, disturb'd and dejected, and oftentimes groaning and roaring under the fewere Hand of the Almighty. Some Persons that measure Religion by their own carnal Reasonings and Apprehensions, Scoff at holy Penitents, and even Laugh at their Tears, as the mere product of a disturb'd Imagination: Others Interpret this Trouble of Spirit to be no less than an Argument of their desperate Condition, and that God hath utterly forfaken them, And hereupon Religion and Holiness are condemned as Black and Melancholy, and are reputed the great enemies and diffurbers of Joy and Contentment, as I observ'd before. But alas these Men are not acquainted with the Course of God's Proceedings: they know not those Pangs and Throws which go before the new Birth; and therefore they are Censorious, and pass Sentence upon those whose Condition is safe and

and happy, and in the mean time they think not of the forlorn and wretched State they are in themselves. But be not you deluded by false Apprehensions of things: remember what is God's Method: he brings down to the Dust, before he lists up. It is his Pleasure, that Sorrow and Anguish should be the Harbingers of Joy and Peace. If you bear this in your Thoughts, I hope you will be far from Censuring those that you see forrowful and disconsolate; those that you hear crying out and complaining because of the Afflictions of their Minds. Pity and Pray for them, but do not peremptorily and uncharitably determine concerning them. This is the Method of Providence, this is the Will and Pleasure of the Almighty, that

Sorrow should usher in lov.

Be not so bold then as to Censure such Persons for Hypocrites, as it is too common among the generality of Men to do; they are wont to open their Mouths wide with Obloquies against those whom they observe to be smitten of God. But Judge not before the time; Condemn not those poor reftless and afflicted Souls, lest you be found to Condemn the Generation of the Just. Blame them not for those uneasy Postures which you see them in, but rather question whether you should have born such Afflictions with more courage and evenness of Spirit, if you had been in their Case. Could you have indeed fuch hot Service, and not have shrunk and fallen back? Oh do not Censure, but rather pity poor distressed Creatures. You are wont to lend your Compassion to necessitous and shiftless Wretches, who have no Allowance to live upon, but that of your Charity: You commiserate the distressed Inhabitants of Hospitals, whose Wounds are so many Mouths to plead in their behalf, whose Sores and Ulcers are so many Attractives of a healing Pity. And are these the deserved objects of your Christian Compassion? Then certainly those are, or ought to be much more so, who are doubly miserable, distressed in Soul, and afflicted in Body; the former of these being overwhelm'd with the Sense of God's Displeasure, the latter being smitten with Pain, Diseases and Tortures, which are the effects of God's Wrath, and the fruit of their own Sins. Heartily commiserate the forlorn condition of such Persons; as no doubt you would expect their Pity towards you, if you

were in the same Circumstances.

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Fourthly, Learn to hate Sin, and to fly from it as from a Serpent, from that which carries a dreadful Sting with it, and which empoisons both Body and Soul. You have heard what are the horrible Effects and Fruits of it in those Persons who have felt the Venom of it : Hence be effectually moved to abhor and detest all Sin, to be afraid of Offending and Displeasing him who is a Confuming Fire; to be very careful of your ways and doings, and thereby to prevent the Anger of God towards you. Sin is the most loathsome and destructive Plague, the Fruit of it is most Cursed and Fatal. I speak not of it in its full Extent and Latitude (in which sense all the Miseries and Evils that are in the World, have their rife from it) but I confine my felf now to that Evil which follows Sin even in those Persons who have not sinned themselves into a reprobate State, but have the Principle of Divine Grace remaining in them. Sin even then, and in those Persons, produces Evils of that kind and degree which are insupportable. The Spirit of a Man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear? faith Solomon, Prov.

18. 14. This Question is a downright Negative, none is able to bear it : Unless the Persons who Labour under it be extraordinarily upheld by the Divine Hand, they must needs sink. For it is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God, that God who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, that God who useth to Punish Sin,

and that very feverely in his own People.

O think of this all you that have hitherto forgot God. Sin will at last prove most painful and tormenting. Tho' it look fair and pleasant now, yet it will be deformed and frightful in your Eyes, when God shall vouchsafe to open them, to enlighten your Minds and Consciences, You will find that Sin is bitterness in the latter End, how fweet soever it seem'd at first. At present you go on in your Sins without fear and check; You indulge your felves in all manner of Evil, you forget God and all that is good, you Sin without re-Araint, you follow the vicious Custom and Fashion of the Times you live in, and the Place you dwell in, and the Persons you converse with. these are given to Lying, and Swearing, and Defrauding; or if they be addicted to Drunkennels, and Whoredom, and Uncleanness; or if Covetousness, or Pride; if Injustice, or Oppression, or any other Sin be their Practice, you are ready to follow their Example, and to make them your Patterns, in whatfoever Vice you observe in them. This you do, and you take delight in it : You please your selves in displeasing God. But let me tell you, this Pleasure will not last long: You will find it to be an evil and bitter thing, to have anger'd the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, by Disobeying his Laws. The direful Consequences of Sin are not to be express'd. Yea, though you appertain

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pun pertain to the Election of Grace, though God fhall vouchfafe to call you effectually by his Spirit, this fingular Favour towards you may not exempt you from those sad and doleful Resections which have been the Portion of some true Converts, David committed Murder and Adultery, but how grieyous and lamentable was his Condition? How afflictive and tormenting was it before the Guilt of these two heinous Sins was wiped off, and before the Favour of God was obtain'd? Several of his Pfalms inform you what a poor disconsolate Creature he was : He found God incensed against him, his Conscience like some Fury haunted and molested him, his Spirit was incompassed with Grief and Sorrow; in so much that I may boldly fay, David could have indured all Saul's Perfecutions, and his own Son's Rebellion, with far less disquiet than this Spiritual Affliction which was upon him. Peter denied Christ, which was a most heinous and crying Offence: but without doubt his Regret and Remorfe of Mind were answerable to this Sin: before he could be receiv'd into Favour, and obtain Pardon, he wept bitterly. By fuch Examples as these you may discover the dismal Effects and Fruits of Sinning against God. If the Holy Scripture be true, and if the complaints and doleful Outcries of Penitents be to be credited, it will be thus as I have told you. And therefore it is Folly to deny it, yea, he is little less than an Atheift, who doubts of it.

The Maladies that come by Sin, are both Mental and Bodily. Sometimes indeed the Soul only is grieved. The Affliction is of the nature of that fort of Lightning which melts the Sword without hurting the Scabbard: But frequently the Body is concerned no less than the Mind. It is here as'twas at the Deluge of old, the Windows of Heaven, and the Fountains of the deep are opened. The Soul is immediately overwhelm'd from above, and the outward Man is afflicted with the Crosses which are incident to this lower World; and by both these there must needs be a great Inundation of Sorrow and Diffress. Think of this, and be afraid to offend the Divine Majesty; and let this Consideration strengthen you against the Allurements and Blandishments of Sin. Look not upon it as it comes towards you with good Words and fair Promises, and with a smiling Aspect, but behold it as it goes from you, view well the fatal train which follows after it. Resolve never to be fuch Fools as to gratify your vain Lusts and Appetites, and thereby to deprive your felves of all Ease and Peace here, and of the Eternal Rest hereafter. Buy not Repentance (and that no true Repentance neither) at so dear a rate as Trouble and Anguish in this World, and endless Torment in another.

Or fay that thy Confcience is now feared, and void of Sense; say that thou never feelest any Pangs in thy Breast; yet know this, that thy Sense will be quick and lively in the future State; all that thou hast done in this Life will be recollected then; thy Sins will be fet in order before thee, and thou wilt not be able to divert the Sight of them: then thou wilt meet with Fiends and real Furies that will Scourge and Torment thee, bevond all the Invention of Poetry. The refult of all is this, That we ought to difregard the Pleafure of Sin, which is but for a feafon, and ferioully to think of the Everlasting Punishment which will certainly attend our wilful offending of God,

and by these means to be stirred up to a Holy and

Religious Life.

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Fifthly and lasty, Provide for the Day of Trouble and Tryal. This Condition which I have described to you, and which is so black and dismal, is not only the allotment of Persons at their first Conversion and Entrance into Religion, but oftentimes through the All-wife Providence of God, these Terrors and Affrightments, these Afflictions of Body and Mind, are the Portion of those who have made some Progress in Religion, and have had more than ordinary Experience of the Grace of God. Be not high-minded, but fear; fear lest by your Sins you provoke God to exercise you with those Pains and Agonies which are the Recompence of wilful Transgressors. Prepare your selves against such Calamitous Events. Earnestly beg God's Grace and Affistance, that you may not fink and perish under your Burden. Search your Hearts with great diligence, take notice of your particular Failings and Miscarriages, see what it is which may justly provoke God to afflict you : discover the true Cause of it, and be sure not to cherish those Sins which may prove so unkind to you, and plunge you into the greatest Mise-

But if it shall seem good to the All-wise God to let you seel the Essects of his Anger, then be careful of your Carriage and Behaviour in such a condition. Exercise your Faith with greater Vigour than usually, nourish your Hope, and your Patience. Let your present Terrors prepare you for suture Pardon and Forgiveness, and sit you to receive the Tidings of Mercy with an extraordinary Thankfulness. Let the Avenger of Blood drive you to the City of Resuge. I will apply that Pas-

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fage in Jer. 23. 29. to this purpose, Is not my Word like as a Fire, faith the Lord, and like a Hammer that breaketh the Rock in pieces ? The Law with its Terrors may fitly be Resembled to a Hammer, which forcibly breaks and shatters all: But the Gospel may be compared to a Fire, because it melts and kindly dissolves those Hearts to which it is applied. And this also Represents to us the nature of Legal and Evangelical Repentance; the former is forcible and violent, the latter operates by a kind Warmth and Heat. The former must make way for the latter. The Legal Repentance must lead you to a more genuine and godly Sorrow, the true Gospel-Repentance. Having therefore shewed you, and that very amply, what the first of these is, I should now proceed to display the second to

you.

But before I do that, I will, for the fake of the

Curious and Critical, shew how these two, Legal and Evangelical Repentance, are fitly and aptly express'd to us by the words in the Three Learned Languages which denote to us Repentance. In the Greek there are these two Words, uslauixna and usavera; the first of which exactly Points out to us the Nature of Legal Repentance, for ulauiance is to be Sollicitous and Anxious, to be troubled and vexed after the Fact, which is accompanied with Anguish and Torment. This directly Answers to the Hebrew Word Necham, which is often used in the Old Testament, and denotes that Trouble and Perplexity of Mind, which follows upon a fight and fense of Sin. The second Word used in the New Testament, signifies a change of Mind, a being Wife after the Fact, and confequently a doing better than before. And this answers to the Hebrew Word Shevah, which fignifies to Return, to come

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come to our selves again; and is render'd by the Seventy insertion, Ensertour, to turn from, and turn unto. And accordingly in the New Testament uslavois and Ensertour are join'd together as in the Text before us, Repent and be Converted: and in Acts 26. 20. That they should Repent, and turn unto God. Which latter Expression gives us a true notion of the Gospel-Repentance, which is not a bare Grief and Trouble, but is a change of the Soul from Evil to Good.

But I am to shew in the next place, that the Latin Words whereby Repentance is expressed, namely, Panitentia and Resipiscentia, carry along with them the true Notion and Nature of Legal and Evangelical Repentance. Panitentia, from Pana, sets forth the former fort of Repentance: for what is the Legal Grief and Terror, but the Punishment or Penance of the Soul? And the latter kind of Repentance is well denoted to us by the other Word, Resipiscentia, which properly fignifies being Wife again, and a taking of a Course quite different from what was taken before. This fully represents the nature of Gospel-Repentance, which is a Change of the Heart and Life. And thus I have fet before you the Original Words which are used to express the Grace of Repentance. whether it be Legal or Evangelical.

I have wholly dispatch'd the first of these, and have no more to add concerning it: And therefore am now to betake my self to the second. And as in a former Discourse I shew'd you the Nature of Saving Faith, by setting before you, first the Esential Asts of it, and then secondly, by letting you see what are the Fruits and Essets of it; so I intend to proceed in the same Method here, that is, to give you a full Account of the Gospel-Repen-

tance.

tance, by affigning the Essential Parts and Acts of it, and also the genuine Fruits and Consequences of it.

I begin with the first, viz. to describe the Evangelical Repentance by its proper Acts and Parts; which are these two, 1. A Godly Sorrow and Grief for Sin. But this you will say, was the Main Ingredient of Legal Repentance; How then is it made a part of that Repentance which is Evangelical? I Answer, That the Sorrow which I am now to speak of, is not of the same Nature with that which constituted the Legal Repentance. It proceeds from other Principles, it leads to other Ends, and is every way unlike it, as you shall have it made Evident to you, when I come to speak of it particularly. 2. The other Essential Act or Part of Gospel-Repentance, is a turning from Sin to God,

or a Change and Amendment of Life.

Or take it in other Terms thus; Gospel-Repentance is a deep Humiliation, and a compleat Reformation: These are the Essential and Integral Parts of Evangelical Repentance: these are the natural and immediate Emanations of it: and if we confider things aright, and distinguish of Notions as we ought to do, we shall find that these two are all the Essential Parts of Gospel-Repentance; tho' I know I differ herein from many Writers who have treated (and that very Worthily) on this Subject. You will find that they have confounded the Matters which belong to it: If you will take the Pains to distinguish warily between things, and to range and marshal your Notions aright, it will appear to you very plainly, that some things are reckoned by them as Parts of this Repentance, which are rather the Entrance and Preparative to it; and other things likewise are accounted Essential

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tial Acts of it, which ought to be number'd among the Effects and Fruits of it. I have already shew'd what are the Preparatives to Gospel-Repentance, and I shall afterwards assign the particular Effects of it; but at present it shall be my Task to insist wholly on the Essential Parts or Acts of it.

To enter then upon this Important Work; the first Essential Act or Part of Gospel-Repentance is Godly Sorrow. But here it will be Objected (upon the first mentioning of this Particular) that Sorrow is rather a Forerunner and Disposition only of Gospel-Repentance, than a Part of it; for 'tis said in 2 Cor. 7. 9. Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance. Now, if it works, that is, causes and produces Repentance, it can't be a Part of Repentance, or of the Essence of it; for nothing can work or cause it self. It may seem therefore more probable that Sorrow is as the Cause and Principle, and Repentance is to be reckoned as the Essett and Result of that Cause.

But I Answer, Repentance is taken differently in Holy Scripture; that is, sometimes we understand by it a compleat Repentance, at other times some Part of it only is meant; and this latter acceptation of it is very frequent in Scripture. So then, when it is faid that godly Sorrow works Repentance, it is not to be understood of Compleat Repentance, because Compleat Repentance confifts of all its Parts; and consequently, if Sorrow be a Part of it, it would be faid to work it felf; which is not to be admitted: And therefore by Repentance in the forenam'd Places, must be meant the Main and Chief Part of Repentance, but not the whole of it, not compleat and entire Repentance; and then the Sense is this, That godly Sorrow for Sin, though it be one Part of Evangelical RepenRepentance, yet it may have, and hath Influence upon the other parts of it (as one Faculty of the Soul influences another, viz. the Reason or Understanding upon the Will and Affections, altho' they are the Faculties of one and the same Soul.) In a resembling manner, Godly Sorrow, tho' 'tis a Part of Repentance, yet it works and influences on the other great part of it, which I have told

you is turning from Sin unto God.

To this purpose be pleased to consult that Text. Acts 2. 37, 38. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and faid unto Peter and the reft of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter faid unto them, Repent. St. Peter's Auditors, whom he had convinced of their notorious Sin of Murdering Christ, are said to have been pricked in their Hearts; and thereupon they put that Question, What shall we do? The Answer was, Repent. Whence perhaps some may infer, that Compunction is not a Part of Repentance, because St. Peter bids them Repent after they were pricked in their hearts. But this is no good Inference, but rather this may be gathered from the words, that Sorrow and Compunction are not compleat Repentance; and therefore, when St. Peter exhorts them to Repent, it is as much as if he had faid, It is true you have attained to one Part of Repentance already, that is, Compunction. (As if the sharpest Darts and Stings had been flruck into your hearts, as if you had been pierced with a Sword or Spear, as if the Points of fo many Daggers were at your Hearts.) Well, you have attain'd, faith the Apostle, to this part of Repentance, viz. Godly Sorrow, and Remorfe of Soul: It remains now, that you Perfect your Repentance, that you Consummate that Grace. Repent, i. e. Compleat your RepenRepentance: You are pricked in the Heart: improve this to a full and entire Repentance. There is never any true Gospel-Repentance without godly Sorrow and Contrition; but this is but one A& of Repentance. Therefore proceed, and let that Repentance which begins at your Hearts, end in

your Lives.

But here it will be Objected again, that Sorrow or Grief is part of Legal Repentance, which I told you was only a Preparative to the Evangelical one: Why then do I affert, that Sorrow is likewise an Effential Part of Gospel-Repentance? Can it be a part of this and of the other too? How can thefe things be reconciled? Besides, it is evident and undeniable, that the worst of Men have sometimes lain under great Sorrows of Mind for their Sins. Cain was deeply sensible of his Sin, and grievously troubled. Pharaoh, that profligate Prince, was convinced of his obduracy, and acknowledged it. Esau bemoan'd his Folly with wet Eyes. Of Judas, the vilest Miscreant upon Earth, it is positively affirmed, that he Repented, μεταμεληθείς, Mat. 27. 3. i.e. (as the Original Word fignifies) he expressed a great Grief of Mind for his past Sin; he look'd upon it with Vexation and Trouble, and wish'd heartily he had not done it. You read in Acts 7. 54. that St. Stephen's Auditors were cut to the heart; they were cut as it were with a Saw (as obsteiors the Word imports) and yet they were far from True Repentance, as you may gather from what you read afterward in that Chapter. The Story of Francis Spira is not unknown to some of you: How miserably was he cut and torn? What dreadful Anguishes and Agonies did he lie under? How Terrible was the fight of his Sins to him? And God hath punished other Pro-E 2 fligate fligate Sinners with the like Tortures and Anguishes of Soul. Many have felt these to a very high degree, but never knew what Gospel-Repentance is, and consequently what Godly Sorrow (which is

an essential Part of it) signifies.

I must let you see then how the Legal Sorrow and the Evangelical one dister: Which I cannot better do, then by acquainting you what are the particular Qualifications of this Sorrow, which is an Ingredient of Gospel-Repentance. The peculiar Properties of it are these; 1. It is ever attended with hope of Mercy and Pardon. 2. It ariseth from a Filial Fear and Love of God. 3. It is always accompa-

nied with hatred of Sin.

The first Qualification of this Godly Sorrow is this, That it is attended with Hope of Mercy and Pardon; whereas the mere Legal Sorrow and Grief are destitute of this. To this purpose let me observe, that Sorrow for Sin hath one of these two Effects; It either makes Persons go further from God, and plunges them into despair; or it brings them nearer to him. Of the former there are fuch Instances as these, Cain, Esau, Saul, Judas. One of them cried out that his Sin was greater than he could bear. Another lamented his Fate with ineffectual Tears, when it was too late. And the other two laid violent Hands on themselves. The Sense of their Sin and Folly made them renounce the Divine Mercy, and fly from God as from a Tormen-When there is only the Legal Sorrow in the Soul; when the Spirit of Bondage folely Rules in the Mind, the Sinner expects no Favour and Kindness, he looks for no Pardon; and this makes him run into the Commission of greater Evils; this makes him careless of what he doth, and at last renders him absolutely Desperate. But

But on the other hand it may be observ'd, that a Sight of Sin, and a Trouble for it, draws Offenders nearer to God, and brings them upon their Knees to ask of him Mercy and Forgiveness, and humbly to hope in his Goodness and Clemen-This is the Godly Evangelical Sorrow which I am now fetting before you. I shall illustrate and confirm this by two notable Instances, viz. of King Hezekiah, and the Prophet Jonah. See this in the former, that true Penitent, Isa. 38. 13, 14. where is described the Sorrow and Grief he lay under upon the Tidings of Death, and upon the apprehension of his Failings and Miscarriages; for though 'tis said, that he walked before God in truth and a perfect heart, and had done that which was good in his fight (as we read ver. 3.) yet without doubt he had many Failings and Declenfions, and for these he wept fore (as we read in the same Verse); he wept with great weeping, as the Original hath it; his Sorrow was very deep and pressing, which is pathetically express'd in those forenam'd Verses: I reckoned till Morning, that, as a Lion, so he will break all my Bones: from day even till night wilt theu make an end of me. Like a Crane or a Swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a Dove: mine Eyes fail with looking upward.

Hitherto his Remorse and Trouble are expressed; thus far the Legal Repentance and Sorrow are set down. But you may take notice, that this made way for, and was attended with a Chearful Hope of Mercy and Pardon; which is one Qualification of the Gospel-Repentance. O Lord, I am oppressed, saith he, but do thou undertake for me, the latter part of the 14th Verse. Here is the first glimpse of Hope, do thou appear for me, and then my Condition will be safe, and my Sins shall never

never prove destructive to me. And in the 17th Verse you find his Faith and Hope breaking forth with a more redundant Brightness and Lustre: Thou hast in love to my Soul deliver'd it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy back; thou hast already done it, or I am as sure of it as

if it were done.

I will shew you this further in the expression and behaviour of the Prophet Jonah, whose Troubles and Sorrows you may observe, were mix'd with a continual Hope of Mercy. Thou hast cast me into the deep, faith he, Chap. 2. Ver. 3. All thy billows and waves pass'd over me : then I said, I am cast out of thy fight, Verse the 14th, (that is, when I confider my Sins, I am in great Terrors and Desponding: I run away from thee, but now thou. hast seized on me, and laid me up fast: now I see what it is to disobey thee. I am sensible of my Sin; and at the same time of thy Wrath. Thou may'ft justly cast me out of thy Presence, who endeavour'd to fly from it; and thou mayest for ever let me lie tormented under the heavy pressure of my Sins) yet I will look again towards thy holy Temple: I despair not of the Mercy and Goodness of God, I will not cast away my hope and confidence in my God. And v. 7. When my Soul fainteth within me, I remembered the Lord, and my Prayer came in unto thee into thy holy Temple. Observe here the true godly Penitent; tho' he hath a deep sense of his Sins, and is extreamly troubled for them, yet he entertains a hope of Forgiveness and Pardon. And truly this is it which partly constitutes a True, Genuine, and Evangelical Repentance, namely, a Godly Sorrow attended with a fiducial expectation of God's Mercy and Favour. In the true Penitent there is a comfortable Reliance on Divine

Divine Goodness, and the gracious Promises of Remission of Sin. If we have the true Evangelical Sorrow, we shall lay hold on the Covenant of Grace, which holds forth Reconciliation and Atonement for Christ's fake. This then we may fafely lay down as a certain Proposition, that one great difference between Gospel-Repentance and that which is merely Legal is this, That the Sor+ row which is an ingredient of the former, is always accompanied with a lively Expectation of Grace and Pardon: but the Sorrow, which is a part of the latter, is wholly destitute of it. These two are excellently represented to us by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 7. 9, 10, Now I rejoice not that ye are made forry, (Sorrow in it felf being no matter of Rejoicing) but that ye forrowed to Repentance, (which is true matter of rejoicing) for ye were made forry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing (you may be fure that godly Sorrow will not hurt you: ) Yea, the Apostle adds, that 'tis so far from doing this, that it worketh Repentance to Salvation. but the Sorrow of the World worketh Death; that is, if a Sinner get no further than the Legal Sorrow, he is swallowed up of it, and runs into Despair: But the godly Sorrow hath no fuch fatal Event, but leads a Man to Peace and Toy by his taking hold of the Mercy and Pardon which are tender'd by Christ Jesus. Thus I have plainly and distinctly fet before you the first Difference between Legal and Evangelical Sorrow.

The fecond Qualification of this latter Sorrow is this, That it proceedeth from, and is ever attended with a Filial Fear and Love of God. And herein also it is sufficiently distinguished from the Legal Sorrow, which is the Spirit of Bondage to fear. It is a slavish and service Dread of the Almighty; and

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those that are possessor of it, are frighted and scared into some tolerable behaviour. The horror of Conscience which arises from this fearful Apprehension, makes them abstain from some Crimes, and forces them to a compliance with some Commands of God. But because there is nothing of the Love of God in it, it can't be stilled Godly Sorrow.

I would not be mistaken here, as if I did wholly exclude all Dread and Fear of Punishment even in those Persons who are truly Penitent. No, that is not my design, and you may gather that it is not from what I have faid before; for though Sorrow and Remorfe at first may have an Eye to the Punishment of Sin, and the Wrath of God, they having no other fpring than the Spirit of Bondage; yet when thro' the Grace of God they proceed further, and have their rise from a better Principle, the Spirit of Adoption, they become Free and Ingenuous; and now are the true godly Sorrow. This is what the Apostle acquaints us with, 2 Tim. 1. 7. God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power and of Love; that is, such a loving temper as furnishes us with Strength and Power to oppose Sin upon better grounds than those of Fear and flavish Dread. The True Penitent heartily grieves, that he hath displeased and provoked the Majesty of Heaven; that he hath, by his sinful Behaviour, offended him whom it was his indifpensable Duty and Interest to please.

Take this in two notable Examples; the First is in Gen. 39. 9. How can I do this great Wickedness, and Sin against God? There were many Arguments which might have diffiwaded this Person from committing the sin of Adultery; for it was reckoned a great Crime even among the better sort of

Heathens. Natural Conscience might have diverted him from it. Or the Dread and Horror of Conscience which would follow upon such a Fact. might have been thought of. Or the fear of a furprife, and the unavoidable Danger which would attend it, was sufficient to deter him. Nay, the very Difgrace and Discredit which he might expect, when it came to be known, was enough to discourage him. All these Considerations might have restrain'd him. But it was something else, of a higher Nature, that wrought upon him, namely, that Ingenuous and Noble Principle, that be would not fin against God; that such a Fact would be difpleasing to him. And when at any time it should be his unhappiness to fall into Sin, and to offend God, his Sorrow for fo doing would commence on this very Principle.

The other Instance is that of David, in Pfal. 51. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy fight. Where you may observe, that when this true Penitent came to lay open his Sins, and to shew his Sorrow for them, he lets us know what was the true Principle and Ground of that Sorrow. Tho' he had at other times acquainted us, that the Consideration of the Punishments and Judgments which attend the commission of Sin, had extorted from him a Grief and Anguish of Mind, and caused him to feel excessive Dolours and Torments; yet now he gives us to understand, that he is influenced by a more kindly Principle, and that the greatest grief of his Heart is that he had offended him, whom to have obeyed fhould have been his chiefest aim and business, thro' his whole Life. David had sinn'd against Uriah, by taking away his Life, and the Lives of those innocent Persons who fell with him, as well as by corrupting

rupting Bathsbeba; and upon several other accounts his Adultery and Murder were Offences, not only against God, but against others; yet he faith, Against thee only have I finn'd: By such Language expreffing the Truth and Sincerity of his Repentance. As much as if he had faid, Though I was immediately fet upon the Throne by God (which is not the Cafe of other Kings) and therefore can't be call'd to an Account for my Actions by any of my Subjects, yet this will not eafe my Pain, nor quiet my Mind: The fatal Shaft still sticks in my Side, and it miserably Wounds and Torments me. It is true, the high Dignity and Office wherein thou haft, by an extraordinary hand, placed me over thy People, permits me not to Answer for what I have done before any Humane Judicature; but notwithstanding this, I am unspeakably troubled and disquieted, because I have offended thee, the Supreme King and Ruler of the World, unto whom all Kings of the Earth must do Homage. Or if I were liable to Mens Judgments, and could receive my Sentence from them, yet that would not grieve me; but the main thing which lies heavy on mySpirit, is that I have displeased and dishonoured thee; thee whom I should have studied by all ways to please and honour; thee who hast so infinitely oblig'd me to serve thee; thee to whom I am engaged by all the ties and bonds of Love. Against thee I have sinn'd. It is this which begets an intolerable Regret and Remorfe in my Soul.

And this certainly is the nature of Godly Sorrow for Sin; it swallows up all other Troubles, and dwells only or chiefly upon this, That the great God of Heaven and Earth is disobeyed, and his holy and just Laws set at nought and disregarded.

This ftirs up the most dreadful Passions in the Soul. This is matter of the greatest Lamentations and Mournings. There are fome Perfons who lament their Sins because they are apprehensive that they shall fare the worse for them: They are grieved and troubled because by vicious Actions they have offended Men; and more particularly, because they have incur'd the Displeasure of their Friends, who were in a Capacity to do them Kindnesses; and so have injur'd themselves more than them. Or, there are other Reasons which cause Discontent and Sorrow: One Man bemoans his Drunkenness, because his Body, his Estate, his Credit, are impair'd by it; another is griev'd for his Lewdness, because there are bitter Fruits of this as well as of the foresaid Vice, and because 'tis positively said, Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge. And so other Sins are lamented and grieved for, but on no other ground than this, that they are attended with Punishments and Judg-But this is not the true Sorrow, this is not the genuine Grief for Sin; nay indeed, this is not grieving for Sin, but for fear of Punishment, and by reason of the Danger which accompanies wicked Actions. But the Godly Sorrow which worketh Repentance unto Life, proceeds from the consideration of our offending God, and offering Affront unto Heaven; of finning against so many Engagements that have been laid upon us by the All-wife Being and Maker of the World. It is a stinging Reflection, that a Creature should dare to oppose his Creator; that a despicable Worm should rise in Rebellion against the Omnipotent God. Thus we see how a filial Fear of displeasing our Heavenly Father, is the Root of Gospel-Sorrow.

I proceed next to the third Qualification of this Sorrow, and that is this, It must proceed from, and be accompanied with a hatred of Sin. I told vou, that pelavoia, one of the Words which fignifies Repentance, denotes a Change of the Mind. The Will and Affections must be alter'd, and put into another frame and tendency. There must be an Aversion, a strong Aversion in those Faculties from all Sin and Vice. The Gospel-Sorrow must be attended with an Abhorrence and Derestation of them. I abhor my self, and Repent in Dust and Asbes, saith that good and holy Penitent, Job 42.6. Abhor that which is evil, faith the Apostle, Rom. 12. The Greek Word Sposoyen is very remarkable and emphatical, directing us to hate and detest Sin, of Σπ' as Hell it felf. But we must bear the greatest and most implacable hatred of all against Sin, as it is Sin. This is the true Evangelical Hatred. Many are inclin'd to hate it as it is hurtful, and provokes God's Wrath and Anger, and brings Mischief with it, and proves destructive both to Soul and Body. But this is but a part of the Legal Repentance which I discoursed of before. The true and faving Sorrow which I am now commending to you, must be the product of hatred of Sin, because it is Sin.

I will briefly Explain this to you in these Four Particulars. 1. We ought to hate Sin for its intrinsick Evil and Depravity. It is to be loath'd by us because of its inward Filthiness, Impurity, and Turpitude. Then we may conclude our Repentance to be True and of the Right Sort, when it flows from a deep Sense of the vile Nature of every Vice, even in it self abstractly consider'd. 2. Every sincere Penitent abhors Sin because of its contrariety to God, and his pure and holy Nature.

It is necessarily included in the very Being and Essence of God, that he is Holy: But it is of the Essence of all Sin to be opposite to the Divine Nature and Being. 3. The Repenting Soul hates all Sin because of its repugnancy to the Divine Commands and Injunctions. God being our absolute Sovereign, his Will and Pleasure are not to be disputed. Wherefore when he enjoins us to serve him, to love him, to abstain from all Vice, and to discharge our Duty faithfully, he is to be entirely obeyed by us. But Sin is a breach and violation of the Divine Injunctions, and for this reafon is to be hated and abhorred by all those that acknowledge God to be their Lord and Sovereign. 4. It deserves this hatred and abhorrence, because it is so base and unworthy a thing, and that which any Person of Ingenuity and Gratitude would oppose. Sin! What is it but a Crucifying again the Lord of Life, and putting him to open Shame? What is it but a Piercing and Wounding of Christ afresh? How unthankful an Enterprise is it, to endeavour, as much as in us lies, to baffle the gracious Design of Heaven, to frustrate the Intentions of Mercy to Mankind, to give a repulse to infinite Love and Kindness, to forsake God and his tenders of Favour, to unite our felves to Satan, and take part with him, and carry on all his curfed and hellish Designs? Thus you see how the true Hatred of Sin is to be manag'd.

And here the old Maxim will take place, A quatenns ad omne. If we must hate Sin as it is Sin, then consequently we must hate all Sin, and all the Kinds and Degrees of it. Likewise, we must hate Sin above all things whatsoever, above all Crosses and outward Evils, yea, not only above all Temporal but Eternal Misery. Moreover, our

hatred of Sin must be such as is able to destroy the former habits of Sin, and all love and liking of it. It must also be constant and resolved, an implacable and irreconcilable Detestation: And in a word, of that Nature that we must choose rather to die than commit the least Sin. So much for the first Essential Act of Gospel-Repentance, namely, a Godly Sorrow and Remorse, which must be attended with a Hope of Mercy, a Fear and Love

of God, and an entire Hatred of all Sin.

You may remember, that I lately spoke of the Degrees and Measures of that Grief and Sorrow which attend Legal Repentance. Therefore it may be expected, that I should say something of the Measure and Proportion of that godly Sorrow which accompanies the Gospel-Repentance. Of this then I will fpeak very briefly, and Answer an Objection against it, and so directly proceed to what I propounded. As to the Measures of godly Sorrow, this I lay down in general, that it must be no mean and ordinary Sorrow. This you may gather from Zech. 12. 10, &c. where this Evangelical Grief or Mourning is pathetically described thus; I will pour out upon the House of David and the Inhabitants of Ferusalem, the Spirit of grace and of Supplications, and they [ball look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ball mourn for him (now follows the Degree of the Mourning) as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in bitterness for bim as one that is in bitterness for his first born. Such Mourning, viz. that which is occasioned by the Death of an only Son is usually very great and passionate, and accompanied with the deepest Sighs and Groans, and the loudest Accents of a just Lamentation. But this doth not suffice to express the depth of the Spiritual Mourning: It follows therefore in the next verse, In that day shall there be a great Mourning, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddon. The Evangelical Repentance and Sorrow are Represented here by that doleful and dreadful Lamentation which all Judah and Jerusalem made for King Josiah when he was slain in Battle. Bad Princes die unlamented, yea, 'tis reckon'd a joyful and happy Hour when they expire. Thus the Romans kept Holy-day when some of their Emperors left the World. And our own History tells us, that King Hardiknute's Death was so welcome to his Subjects, that they Celebrated it with open Pastimes and Expressions of Mirth: \* Hock-tide. And to this Day there are some Baker's Chron. Footsteps of it at one \*Time of the

But on the contrary, when good Kings: die, they have their Subjects all in Mourning. Whilst they live, they have our Hearts; when they depart, our Eyes cannot but pay a Tribute to their Royal Dust. So King Josiah's Death was attended with the general Lamentation of all Ifrael. as we read in 2 Chron. 35. to which this place of the Prophet Zechary refers. And it is generally concluded, by Commentators on the Book of Lamentations, that it was composed on purpose to be a Funeral Poem or Elegy on the Death of that Pious King Josiah. And here in this Prophecy the Holy Ghost thinks fit to set forth the Repentance of the Godly, by this remarkable Instance of Funeral Grief for the Death of a good and pious King. All the sharpest Pangs of Sorrow; all the Agonies and Convulsions of Grief, must exert themselves at fuch a time; and all little enough to condole and deplore, to bewail and bemoan fuch a Loss, fuch a Calamity, which is Catholick and Epidemical

But the Prophet Zechary hath not yet finish'd his Description of this Godly Sorrow, but he proceeds in Verses 12, 13. The Land, saith he, shall mourn every Family apart, the Family of the House of David apart, and their Wives apart, &c. And every Family apart, and their Wives apart; which is added yet further to express the nature and quality of true Evangelical Sorrow; for all Commentators agree, that the Prophet in this Chapter speaks of the Times of the Gospel, and of the Evangelical Dispensation, tho' he clothes his matter in such Words and Expressions as seem to relate to the Tewish Oeconomy. He describes here the true godly Sorrow, which is not Slight and Superficial, or a mere external Shew and Appearance, but it is Substantial, Inward and Retired. The Penitents mourn apart, grieve in fecret: Their greatest Sorrow is when they are shut up in their Closets, and are out of the View of others. It is an argument of the fincerity of their Sorrow, if they find it upon their Spirits when they are in Private, and retired from the World, and have no Spectators to take notice of them. An outward femblance of Grief may be in the worst Men; but the other is the attainment only of the truly contrite in Heart. Unless the Soul be afflicted, all outward and bodily Humiliation, and the mournful Ceremonies belonging to it, are nothing worth.

Yea, indeed it is absolutely necessary, that there be inward Agonies of Mind, and that the Evangelical Repentance employ it felf chiefly in the Heart, because without this Sin could never be eradicated; without this the Soul could not be healed of its Maladies, the malignant Pollutions of Sin could not be expell'd. For these will not be cured by any Superficial Applications; they

will not be washed away with a slight Tear. The Pleasures of Sin are so bewitching, and the relish of it is so sweet to our carnal Appetites, that nothing but Gall and Bitterness can make us disgust them. So that when holy Penitents shall be sollicited and allured by new Temptations, these Dolours and Angui, hes are necessary to prevent their relapfing into Sin again. When they fit down and feriously consider, what it hath or will cost them, they will be loath to buy the Pleasure of any Sin at so dear a rate. This shews the necessity of those inward Afflictings of the Soul. And this acquaints you in general what is the Degree of that Godly Sorrow which is required of you. It must be an inward, profound and vehement Grief, exceeding all other Griefs whatfoever. To this purpose it were well if all others were shut up in this: If all our Vexations and Troubles for outward Crosses and Evils concenter'd in, or rather were changed into a hearty Sorrow for Sin. It was the usual saying of a good Man, Sorrow is good for nothing except Sin only. Here it is admirably useful; here it is unspeakably profitable; And here it is that our Sorrow may even exceed, and run over the Banks. It being a forrow for Sin, as Sin, it ought to be cherished by us, it must dwell on our Spirits, and lie down and rife up with US.

But more particularly (to give you the best Account I can, in relation to the Degree and Measure of Godly Sorrow) take it thus; Our Evangelical Sorrow must be proportion'd to the multitude and greatness of our Sins. No Man can exactly and punctually set down the just Proportions of this Sorrow; but this is certainly true, that it ought to be answerable to our former Offences: Our F

Sorrow must be according to the Sins we have committed. And yet here I would not be mistaken; for God, who is the Soveraign Being, is pleased to act differently in the present case. In some Persons he works a Sorrow wholly Commensurate to their former Sins, yet he is pleas'd to deal with others in another manner. This then is only to be said, That in the ordinary and usual Course of the Divine Dispensation, there is a Proportion between Sin and Sorrow, tho' that Proportion be not Exact and Arithmetical. As there is difference of Sins, so there should be difference of Sorrow.

As for the Opinion of the Stoicks, that hath been long since exploded, viz. \* That all \* Agéorn aviore Sins are alike. For though indeed in this they are all equal, that they are committed against the same great Lacrt. in Zenone.

God who gave us our Being, and preserves us in it, and is continually bestowing Mercies upon us; yet some Offences are more heinous and grievous than others, because of the particular Circumstances wherein they are committed; for from hence they receive a new addition of Irregularity, and increase of Guilt, and aggravations of Malignity. The Inequality of Sins might be prov'd from the difference of Commands, and Threatnings and Warnings against some Sins above others: Again, from this, that they do not all proceed from the same Cause; some are from Incogitancy and Ignorance, others are the Effects of Deliberation and Malice. Besides, some Sins are longer continued and perfifted in than others. Moreover, the Inequality of Punishments argue, that all Sins are not alike, but that some deserve greater Penalties than others. From these and other Considerations it is evident, that Sins do differ; And then is there not Reason, that Sorrow for Sin should differ, and that (as I have afferted before) our Remorse should hold some proportion with the Crimes that we have committed? Thus much for the Degrees and Measures of Godly Sorrow.

Now I will Answer an Objection, and so proceed. You speak, some will say, of Sorrowing for Sin, and of the Degrees of it; whereas we are not satisfied, that any Sorrow for Sin is lawful. There is a \* Writer who presumes to affert with great confidence, Medela.

That grieving and mourning for Sin,

are morally Evil, and in themselves Vicious, and consequently are not to be expected from any true Penitent. And he fuggests that all Grief is contrary to Happiness, which consists in Pleasure. And therefore he is of Opinion, that when there are in Scripture, Exhortations to Sorrow for Sin, and to Weep and Lament for our Evil-doings, these prove not that we ought to Grieve and Mourn, but they only fignify that we should hate Sin, and abandon it, and amend our Lives. We must grieve, faith he, secundum effectum, i. e. Sin is to be declined, and Vertue to be imbraced; not secundum affectum, not that we are really to have such an Affliction as Grief in our Minds. In Answer to which I offer these following things: 1. This Writer is hugely mistaken about the Notion and true Nature of Moral Evil, (though he discourses very largely of it, and feems to have made it his Study) when he makes Grief to be Morally Evil, and when he brings Happiness and Misery under Moral Good. These indeed are treated of in Ethicks, but remotely, and by way of Consequence; for Vertue

and Vice only are the immediate and genuine Object of Morality. 2. This must be said, that all forrowful things are not Miserable and Unhappy. Denial of our selves, Mortification, voluntary Death and Martyrdom, as they were never thought to be Evil and Immoral, so neither were they reputed to be things that carry Misery with them. 3. This is to be remember'd, That Sorrow is a kind of Punishment inflicted on us for our Sins. It is (if I may so speak without Offence) an Innocent Penance for Sin. We may then, yea we must undergo it as a fort of Penalty, and we ought not to look upon it as a thing unlawful and evil. 4. Sorrow is an Affliction of the Soul of God's own planting, and therefore must have its time of exerting it felf; And when can it be better exercised than in this Case, grieving for Sin? Whilst this Writer talks against Spiritual and Religious Sorrow, he feems not to understand and consider the Make and Frame of Man; and that as the rest of the Afflictions, so this is to be display'd at the proper time; and there is none more proper than this I'm speaking of. 5. Whereas he faith, that Aversation, or hatred of Sin, is better, fitter, and more proper than Sorrow; he destroys his own Opinion: For Sorrow or Grief is necessarily and inevitably accompanied with Hatred of Sin: As it is in other things, when we are Averse to them, and Hate them, there arises always in our Minds, Grief, Sorrow, and Anguish. 6. This must be remembered, That the godly Sorrow which we defend is in order to something else, which is far greater and worthier. I do not affert that Sorrow is acceptable to God for it felf wholly, and as it is confidered in its abstract Nature. It is a Duty as it is in order to amendment of Life. This is well expres-

fed by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 7. 9. I rejoice not that ye were made forry, but that ye forrowed to Repentance. This Sorrow is good and commendable, because it tends to some greater and higher thing. The fevere Cuttings and Causticks madeuse of by Chirurgeons, are not designed for themselves, but for the recovery, the ease, and health of the Patient. So Godly Sorrow is necessary, as it is a Means to a greater End, and that End is the Ease and Health of the Soul, yea, the Comfort and Joy of it. This Grief and Anguish are instrumental toward the kindly foftning Mens Hearts, and fitting them for the reception of Grace and Mercy. They prepare the way of the Lord. They make way for Peace and Serenity of Conscience in this Life, and for Everlasting Rest and Rejoicing in the World to come, Sorrow for Sin is in this Life only, and 'tis fitted. and fuited to our present Condition and Circumstances; but when this dark Night shall disappear, then a never-failing Light and Joy shall succeed in its place. Wherefore let us comfort one another with thefe Words. And what I have here faid, may abundantly baffle that wild Conceit of \* Crifp. Vol. the Antinomians, that \* Saints and Be-2. Seim. 6. lievers are not required to Mourn and Grieve for their Sins; nay, it smells rank of Popery to do fo. One would not think that this should drop from the Pen of a Protestant Preacher, who cannot but be acquainted with those fundry Passages in the New Testament, (as well as in the Old) wherein the necessity of Spiritual Mourning is represented to

I proceed now to the Second Essential Part of Evangelical Repentance, of true Evangelical Repentance, and that is a Turning from Sin unto God. The Godly Sorrow, with all its Attendants, was

but in order to this, and a forerunner of it. Now is this Turning: there are two things contained, and indeed plainly express'd. I. That from which we are to turn, and that is Sin. 2. The Person to whom we are to turn, and that is God. And the Reason of affigning these two is this; Because as there are two Parts of Sin, fo there must be two Parts of Repentance. In Sin there are these two things, a Turning away from God, the Supreme and Eternal Good, and a Turning to the Creature, to Vanity and Folly. These are the two Evils the Prophet Feremiah speaks of, 2. chap. 13. ver. For laking the Fountain of living Waters, and hewing out Cifterns, broken Cifterns that can hold no Water. This is the State of a Sinner, he rejects God and Goodness, and then he embraces Sin and Wickedness. Though he be bleffed with the knowledge of his Duty, and some measure of ability to discharge it, yet he willingly and freely neglects his Duty, and prefers the Pleafures of Sin, which are but for a feason, before the Eternal Glories of another World. When we Sin, we turn away from God, our motion is from the true Center, and then it is Anomalous and Extravagant, every way Indirect and Excentrical. We greedily embrace that which is Evil; we actually comply with the suggestions of the Evil Spirit.

Answerable hereunto is Conversion and Repentance: There must be a Turning from all Sin and Evil, and Turning to God and all Righteousness. First, I say, there must be a Turning from Sin; and so it is express'd in Scripture. When I spoke of the Hatred of Sin, there was then included a Turning from Sin in our Hearts and inward Man; but now I speak of an outward and actual forsaking of Sin, a forsaking of it in our Lives and Practices, a bidding Farewel to Sin in our Manners and

Con-

Conversations. Thus there must be a forsaking of Pride, of Luxury, of Oppression and Injustice, of Prophaneness and Impiety, and every kind of Sin, to that nothing of it shall be seen in our Lives. And secondly, as there is a Turning from Sin, so there is a Turning to God, and all Goodness and Holiness. The Wife Traveller, when he is told of his Mistake, leaves the wrong Path, and betakes himself to that which will lead him to the place he is defign'd for. Semblably, a Sinner is one that goes out of his Way, he wanders in bypaths: But Repentance is a turning into the right Way, a Correcting of his former Failings and Miscarriages. In the Stile of Holy Scripture you'll find Turning and Returning attributed both to God and Man. God is faid to do fo in Mercy and Favour, but Man is said to do it by Repentance. Come, let us return unto the Lord: And 7. Chap. 10. Ver. and many other places. Repentance is frequently call'd, in the Holy Volume, a Turning unto the Lord; and accordingly, the Jews call Repentance תשובה Conversion.

When I described to you the nature of Godly Sorrow, I told you that it must proceed from a Hatred
of Sin, and a Love of God. These included and
implied a Turning from Sin, and a Turning to
God, in the Heart and Mind: For we may be properly said to turn from Sin by our Abhorrence of
it, and to turn to God by our Love of him. But at
present I am treating of another Turning, viz.
that which is Astual and Operative, and is to be
discern'd in a holy Life. We must Practise those
holy Rules and Laws which we before declined.
Righteousness and Godliness must be seen in our
Conversations: There must be a Change of Life,
as well as of the Mind and Heart. The Man that

before was Fierce and Cruel, Unjust and Uncharitable, must now be Mild and Gentle, Loving and Kind, and exercise all Acts of Justice and Charity in the view of the World. The Man that before was Intemperate and Debauched, given to all Riot and Luxury, must now become Sober and Temperate, and practife Rules of Moderation and Austerity. The Man that once was Proud and Haughty, Arrogant and Infolent, and puffed up with Self-conceit, must now let the World see that he behaves himself Humbly and Modestly, and hath attain'd to Meekness and Self-denial. And tinus I might instance in other Particulars. fhort is, Repentance, which is a turning from Sin unto God, must be Universal; Ezek. 14.6. This faith the Lord, Repent and turn your selves from all your Abominations: And 18. Chap. 30 Ver. Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions. If you compare Mat. 18. 20. with Luke 24. 47. you will see that Repentance, and observing all whatsoever Christ commands, are the same.

These then are the two Branches of this second Essential Act of Gospel-Repentance, namely, a Renouncing of our former Sins, and a betaking our selves to a new course of Life. These are distinctly mention'd in the Holy Writ: The former of these is set forth to us in that Advice of our Saviour, John 8. 11. Sin no more; and 'tis call'd Repentance from dead works, Heb. 6. 1. But the latter is stilled, Repentance toward God, Acts 20. 21. and Repentance to the acknowledging (that is, owning, embracing and practising) of the Truth, 2 Tim. 2. 25. and Repentance unto Life, Acts 11. 18. that is, either unto newness of Life, or in order to Eternal Life and Happiness. And both the one and the other (i.e. Turning from Sin, and Turning

to God) are join'd together by the Psalmist, Psal, 34. 14. Depart from evil, and do good; and by the Prophet Isaiah, 1. chap. 16. ver. Cease to do evil, Learn to do well. And in AEts 26. 18. they are call'd, Turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God: and in Col. 3. 8, 9. Putting off the old Man, and putting on the new: And they are thus expressed by the Apostle, Rom. 12.9. Abbor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good. Thus I have briefly explained the Nature of Gospel-Repentance, by shewing what are its Esential Acts, its Integral Parts. We may from what hath been faid frame this Definition of it: Gospel-Repentance is that Grace of God whereby there is fuch a godly Sorrow wrought in us as is ever accompanied with Hope of Pardon, a Filial Fear and Love of God, and a Hatred of Sin; whereby also we are enabled to turn from Sin, unto God and all Righteousness. This is a plain Account of this Excellent and Evangelical Grace.

I proceed now to some Practical Inferences from what hath been said. And 1. This discovers the gross Mistakes that are in the World about Repentance. 2. This puts us upon Examining and Trying our selves by those several Particulars which I offer'd when I described the true Gospel-Repentance. 3. Hence we are obliged to the actual per-

formance of this Dut y.

First, From what hath been said we may discover the gross Mistakes and Misapprehensions which are usually entertained concerning Repentance; they may be reduced to these following Heads.

that a bare Sorrow for Sin is a sufficient Repentance. If they feel themselves in any measure grie-

ved and troubled in their Minds for the Evils they have done, they think themselves true Penitents. They content themselves with this, that they have attain'd to some Remorfe and Relenting for the Vices they have committed; but they never enquire whether this proceeds from a right Principle, and whether the Spring of their Sorrow be true and genuine. Or, it may be they are so foolish as to rest in the lowest and meanest degree of Sorrow for Sin, and in a bare Conviction of their evil ways. Here the Papifts are justly to be reproved, or rather their Doctors and Instructers, who corrupt Mens Minds with fuch dangerous Doctrine as this, that Attrition, which is but an imperfect kind of Contrition, with Confession to a Prieft, and his Absolution, is sufficient to reconcile a Man unto God, and to Entitle him to Heaven after the most wicked Life. Even the \* Seff. 4. Famous \* Council of Trent, wherein cap. 4. the Romanists think all Theological Points, and all Cases of Religion are stated and decided, delivers this for found and orthodox Doctrine; which certainly is a great encouragement to Vice and Wickedness, and invites Men to be Prophane and Ungodly, perswading them that if at last (that is, when they are to leave the World) they shall find upon their Souls but a mean degree of forrow for their past Sins, and that not proceeding from a genuine Principle, they may reckon themselves in a safe Condition, and that they are fit for Heaven. This Piece of Popery is too common in the World, and I'm afraid hath taken place among many who make Profession of the Protestant Religion, and would have us believe that they have no kindness at all for Rome. Many of these Men satisfy themselves with a general Conviction

wiction of Sin, and a very small Regret of Mind for it, and fancy that this is the whole work of Repentance. But I befeech you, be warned by what I say, and do not delude your own Souls with such a False and Erroneous Opinion.

2. There are others that perswade themselves that good Wishes and Desires will pass for Repentance. They imitate Balaam's Example, who, as wicked and impious as he was, wish'd that he might die the death of the righteous; that is, that he might be taken to Heaven and Happiness as soon as he left this World. And who is there that is not ready to wish after this rate? Who would not be Blessed after this Life? Yea, there are many who faintly wish that they could leave their Sins, and be as good and holy as others; yea, they fay they mean well, and they have good Hearts, (as they falfly call them) and this they think will suffice. But this is far from Repentance; for such a Disposition as this may be found in bad Men. When they think of Religion and another World, (and at one time or other they are enclined to do fo) it is likely that they abound with Wishes and Defires; but they take no care to bring these Desires into Act and Execution, and so they prove infignificant and useless. I pray then beware of this.

3. Some imagine that good Purposes and Promises of a better Life are a sufficient Repentance; but this also is a gross Mistake. Pharaoh, when the Plagues were upon him, promised fair; he would let the Children of Israel go, yes, by all means: But we read how his Heart was hardned, and how he returned to his former wicked Temper. Do not many Drunkards and Swearers, and other vicious Persons, when they are in Sickness, or otherwise

therwise by the hand of God upon them, reminded of their evil Courses, and brought to some sense of them, do they not make very large Promises of Amendment? The present distress and grievance extorts strong Resolves from them: But do we not observe, that they shamefully forget and neglect them; and thereby let us understand that their Resolutions fall short of Repentance? I may deliver it for a great and undeniable Truth, that many Persons who have resolved to live well, are now lamenting their deplorable Condition in Hell-slames: And the reason of it is, because 'tis of no value to Resolve and Promise to do well, unless we really and truly persorm what we promised.

4. Many are willing to believe, that good motions of the Holy Spirit on their Hearts, are a sufficient Proof of Repentance wrought in them. It is not to be denied, that there are common workings of the Spirit upon all Men: There is a general operation and influence upon every Soul, at one time or other; but these, if they be not entirely complied with, are so far from being Arguments and Proofs of Repentance, that they are rather to be reckon'd as Aggravations of those Persons Sins. If they are not improv'd to a hatred of Sin, and a firm Course of Holiness, they augment their Guilt, and will be one day alledg'd in Judgment against them. I beseech you therefore consider of that.

only. They do something that looks like Religion, and hath a resemblance of Goodness and Vertue, and then they are so fond and sottish as to imagine that they have Repented. Pilate call'd for Water, and wash'd his Hands in the view of the Court; that being a Ceremony which signified Innocency;

cannot

nocency; but notwithstanding this outward Pretence, his Heart was unclean, and his Hands were stain'd with Blood. A Man may formally Purge himself, and make use of Arts to excuse and throw off his Guilt, but this will be very insignificant in the sight of God, and this will by no means clear him in his own Conscience. Such a shew of Repentance is far from being that which God requires of him.

6. And lastly, There are some are so foolish as to think that the fending up an Ejaculation, or fhort Prayer, when they are going out of the World, will be reckoned as true Repentance. It is fad and deplorable to relate it; but yet it is most certainly true, that many Ignorant and Prophane Perfons are of the perswasion, that, O Lord have Mercy upon them, when they are expiring, will waft them into the Regions of Happiness, and Land them fafe in the territories of Blifs. If they can have but so much time as to cry out for Pardon of their Sins, they doubt not but this shall pass for perfect Penitence, and that their Souls shall be received into the Kingdom of Glory. They care not how they spend their Lives; they indulge themselves in all manner of Sin and Wickedness: and yet they comfort themselves with this Consideration, That they shall have time, they hope, to call for Mercy before they go out of the World, and they question not but that they shall then find it. But I hope I need not spend any time in confuting the Folly of these Men. You that have attained unto any measure of Knowledge and Sense of Religion, cannot but understand, that Repentance is a thing of a greater and higher Nature, than these Persons represent it to be. For besides that I might fay this, that these deluded Wretches

Lives; they have no reason to presume, that their Days shall be prolong'd: They may never have Time and Opportunity to Repent. Besides this, I say, they can't on any good Ground, think that Repentance thus wilfully deferr'd, will be of any value; for it can't be thought to have any Truth and Sincerity in it; and if it be void of these, it

deserves not the Name of Repentance.

Thus I have briefly and plainly let you fee what are the common Mistakes about Repentance. How few in the World, and even of those who talk of Repentance, and who take it very ill if you do not believe that they are Penitents, how few of these are truly so? The generality of Mens Lives shew but little Repentance. If we scan Mens Actions and Manners, and much more if we could search into their Hearts, we shall find that this Attain-

ment is very rare.

I shall therefore now proceed to the second Part of my Application, which is this, to stir you up to Try and Examine your felves, whether you be of the number of those few who have attained to this Excellent Grace. And here, to help and affift you, I will briefly go thro' the particular Acts and Exertments of Gospel-Repentance, which I before mention'd. First then, I ask you whether you feel a Godly Sorrow for Sin; and (according to the Qualifications of it which I affigned) is it accompanied with a chearful hope of Mercy and Pardon in Christ Jesus? Among your Terrors and Anguishes, do you find a kindly Refreshing from the Thoughts of that Redemption and Satisfaction which is made by the Messias? If your Sorrow be the true Evangelical Sorrow, it hath this for its Attendant. Again, doth your Sorrow proceed from

from Filial Fear and Love? Are you troubled that God is displeased and dishonoured? Do you say with that humble Penitent, Against thee, thee only have I sinned? Are you grieved that you have offended him whom you ought to have served and obeyed, though it had been with the displeasure of all the World. Ask your selves likewise, whether your Sorrow springs from the hatred of Sin, and not merely from the sense of those evil Esses which follow it; namely, Punishments in this Life and in another. Do you loath and abhor Sin as it is such? Do you hate it because of its intrinsick turpitude and baseness? Thus you may try whe-

ther your Sorrow be right and genuine.

Next proceed to examine whether the other Effential Part of Evangelical Repentance be confpicuous in you, that is, a Turning from Sin unto God; a forfaking your former vicious Courfes, and applying your selves to the sincere Practise of all the Divine Commands. To do some Religious Acts is not Gospel-Repentance: No, in its large Circumference it takes in universal Obedience, and the practife of all Duties. It is not only an act of the Mind, of the Heart and Soul, but it takes in also the Actions of Life. To conclude, Repentance is fomething Inward, and fomething Outward: It is something Private and Secret, and it is also something Open and Publick. It is an Habit, and it is an Act: It is a Root and Principle, and 'tis an external Exertment and Behaviour. Wherefore deceive not your selves, but deal faithfully and impartially in the examining your Hearts and Lives.

Thirdly and lastly, Let me exhort you to betake your selves seriously to this great Work of Repentance. Though some of you have deferr'd it a long time, yet now set about it with all vigour and earnestness. If you will at last (after all your delays and neglects) turn unto God, you will be accepted, and find Mercy. But the particular Exhortations and Directions to Repentance, I reserve till I come toward the Close of my Discourse on

this Subject.

In the next place I must (according to the Method which I propounded at first) particularly infift upon the Fruits and Effects, or if you please so to call them, the Signs and Tokens, the Badges and Testimonies, of Gospel-Repentance. And they are fuch as these; 1. Calling our former Sins to remembrance. 2. A Child-like Blushing and Shame at the remembring them. 3. A humble accepting of the Punishment of our Sins. 4. Strong Resolutions. 5. Ardent Prayer and Supplication. 6. Confession of Sin, with all its Aggravations. 7. Praifing God for what he hath done for our Souls. 8. Outward and Bodily Expressions of Godly Sorrow, especially Weeping and Fasting. 9. Making Restitution where the Case requires it. Lastly, An earnest care and endeavour to bring others to Conversion and Repentance. These are the Natural and Genuine Effects of Gospel-Repentance.

And it is requisite I should insist upon these, as well as I did before on the Essential Asts or Parts of Repentance. As those did constitute Repentance, so these do attend and follow it. And these are particularly taken notice of by that notable Preacher of Repentance, John the Baptist, as you may satisfy your selves by perusing Mat. 3. 2, 8. In the second Verse he calls Men to the Duty of Repentance; Repent ye, saith he: That includes the Essential Parts of Repentance; but then he adds in

the 8th Verse, Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance]. There are Fruits and Effects of Repentance, which are things distinct from the Essence of it. And these St. Paul (another eminent Preacher of Repentance) commended to his Auditors, as he tells us himself, in AEts 26. 20. That they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance. Here is, you see, Repenting and Turning to God, (which contains the Essentials of Gospel-Repentance) and here are added the Fruits and Effects of that Repentance, call'd here by the Apostle, works meet for Repentance; or, according to the Original, Mat. 3. 8. nagris agive. Acts 26.20. agra firs uslavoras Egoa, Works worthy of Repentance: Such Expressions and Manifestations of that Evangelical Grace as are some ways worthy of that excellent Principle: Such Fruits as are worthy of that excellent Root. Some of these are inward Effects and Consequences, and others are outward and visible. Some of them are the proper Effects and Refults of the first essential part of Repentance, namely, Godly Sorrow; others are the particular and peculiar Effects or Fruits of the fecond Essential Part of Repentance, viz. Turning from Sin to God: But I shall set them down Promiscuously:

1. And first, I enter upon that which I mentioned in the first place, that is, Calling of our former Sins to remembrance, and (to which I add also) a willingness to be put in mind of them by others. It is true, there is a Remembrance of Sin which is no ways commendable, and cannot be the Sign of Repentance, but rather argues the contrary. There is a Remembring of Sin with pleasure and delight. Of this Zophar speaks in Job 20. 12. giving there the Character of a wicked Man; Wickedness (saith

he) is sweet in his Mouth; he hides it under his Tongue: And ver. 13. He keeps it still within his Mouth; as much as to fay, It is a fiveet and relishing Morfel to him; he likes his Sin, and takes pleasure in ruminating upon it, and as it were repeating it: As they tell us of Caligula, that when he had committed Murther, he would with his Tongue lick and fuck the Blood which remained upon his Sword. There are others (and who are far from true Repentance) who are extreamly troubled when their former Follies and Miscarriages are mention'd to them; they will by no means hear of them. This is too evident a fign that they are Impenitent, and that they retain a kindness for their past Crimes. But it is one Part of the Character of a true godly Penitent, that he is willing to be reminded of his former Offences, and he is not displeased that they are call'd to remembrance. If others do not discharge this office towards him, he himself will be fure to do it.

For this, he hath the Example of David, in that Penitential Pfalm, 51. 2. My Sin is ever before me; I am continually reflecting on those gross Enormities of my Life, for which thou hast most justly afflicted me. This is a conftant Spectacle before my Eyes. When he faith his Sin is ever before him, he doth as good as tell us, that it must be no sudden Thought or Surprise of Mind, but we must constantly meditate and reflect upon our Sins. will be daily Occurrences to remind us of our Faults; the Mercies of God, which we have finn'd against: the Judgments of Heaven, which are the Reward of our Sin; and all the Passages of our Lives, which are accompanied with the like Circumstances which we were in before, will ferve to put us in mind of our former Follies and Miscarriages.

So this Remembrance will be lasting and durable, it will be a continued Act, it will be the work of our whole Lives. David indeed prays, that God would not remember his Sins, Psalm 25.7. But the he desires God not to do it, yet he is concerned himself to remember them. Though God Pardons his Sins, yet he calls them to mind. For this he is throughly perswaded of, that if he remembers his evil ways, God will forget them; that is, he will hide and cover them, and they shall never any more be mention'd against him.

If you would be satisfied further, that this is your Duty, as you are true Penitents, to call your Sins to remembrance, consult Ezek. 16. 60, 61. I will remember my Covenant with thee in the day of thy youth, and I will establish to thee an everlasting Covenant. But what is the Condition, or rather the Effect, of this Covenant? You will read that in the next Verse, Then thou shalt remember thy ways : thou, shalt call to mind thy former doings; for this is the Fruit of the Covenant made with thee, of the New and Evangelical Covenant, of which Christ Jesus is the Author and Founder; for of this the Prophet here speaks, as is manifest from the Context. Let us likewise consult the 20th Chapter of this Prophecy, 43d ver. (where still this inspired Penman speaks of the Times of the Gospel, and the happy Effects of that Repentance which shall be then) Te shall remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath your selves in your own fight, for all the evils which ye have committed. With loathing and hating of Sin, (which, I told you, was one confiderable Root and Spring of Gospel-Repentance) is join'd, remembring of it. Consult yet another place of the same Prophet, Ezek. 36. 27, &c. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them, and ye shall dwell in the Land, and ye shall be my People, and I will be your God.—Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good. Still we may observe, that the Calling of Sin to Remembrance is assigned by the Prophet as a Token and Proof of the true Gospel Spirit, and of

Evangelical Repentance.

Need I illustrate this by St. Paul's Example? Do we not read, that after his Conversion he took all occasions to call to mind his former Behaviour, which had been very Scandalous? Acts 26. 10, 11. Many of the Saints did I shut up in Prison; and when they were put to Death, I gave my voice against them: And I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to Blaspheme; (and from hence, perhaps, it is that in another place, he faith he was a Btasphemer; for he that compells others to Blaspheme, is rightly call'd a Blasphemer himself) and being exceedingly mad against them, I Persecuted them even unto strange Cities ; that is, I made them fly into Pagan Countries, to take shelter among Idolaters and Heathens, and there they found that kindness which I denied them. And so in AELs 8. And frequently in his Epiftles he recalls to mind his former wicked Practifes. And this without doubt is recorded by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, as an evident demonstration of St. Paul's true Penitence, and Godly Sorrow for his past Sins. And this hath been the Practife of all the Servants of the most High, who have found in themselves a deep regret and remorfe for their Sins, and have fincerely turn'd from them unto God.

\* Apolog. \* De vestris fuimus: fiunt, non nascuncap. 18. tur Christiani, saith the excellent Ter-

tullian

were once such as you are, we lived as without God in the World, we Worshipped dumb Idols, and submitted to all the lewd and prophane Rites which the Pagan Priests imposed upon us; we were not Born, but made Christians; our Original was vile and wicked, we can't but acknowledge it, and we desire to call it to Remembrance. Thus he.

Would you know how Reasonable and Accountable it is, that all Gospel Penitents should give this Sign and Mark of their Repentance? I will briefly let you see this in those ensuing Particulars, They not only themselves call to mind their past Failings, but they are willing that others should deal so with them; and that upon this three-fold Account: 1. In respect of God. 2. In respect of themselves. 3. In regard of their Brethren.

First, I say, this must be done in respect of God, that his holy Name may be extolled and magnified. That this is the end and defign of this Duty, will appear from that great Example of Conversion and Repentance in St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 8, 9. Last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time; for I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God: Here is the remembrance of his former Sins. And from the next Words it is clear, that this was in order to the extolling of God's Grace; By the grace of God, faith he, I am what I am, ver. 10. I owe it wholly to the good Pleasure and free Grace of God, that I am not as wicked and prophane as I was before. I must needs make mention of this my former State, that I may the most affectionately praise and thank God for my present Change. See this in another Epistle of G 3 the

the same Apostle, Eph. 2. 1. You hath he quickned who were once dead in trespasses and fins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our Conversation in times past in the lusts of the slesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh: Here is Sin call'd to remembrance. In the next words observe to what end and purpose this is, and what is the good effect of it. It is no other than this, a Praising and Magnifying the distinguishing Mercy of God. God, who is rick in Mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, bath quickned us together with Christ: by Grace ye are faved: And he hath raifed us up together, and hath made us fit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his kindness to us, through Jesus Christ: For by Grace ye are faved. This is repeated, it being the chiefthing he aim'd at in these words. Free Grace is exalted by calling our former Sins to remembrance.

I will make this good by alledging another remarkable Text of the same Apostle, 1 Tim. 1. 12. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry, me who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. Here his former wickedness is remembred; now see in the following Verses, how this is made serviceable to the setting forth the Glory of the great God. He proclaims the Grace of our Lord to be exceeding abundant; he thankfully owns it as a Truth worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom he is chief. But being chief, he hath the greater reason to exalt the Grace and Goodness of God, whereby

whereby he obtained Mercy: Now therefore unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invifible, the only Wife God. be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen. This doxology is the Conclusion of his remembring his former evil ways. And thus 'tis with all true Penitents, though they have not finn'd in fo Notorious a manner as Paul did; they look back on their past Miscarriages, and make this an occasion of expressing their thankfulness, and magnifying the Divine Goodness in the Forgiveness of their multiplied Offences. Now they strive to inhanse the Love of God in Christ Jesus. The review of their former vile demeanor is a powerful motive and incentive to them, to fet forth the Praises of the free Grace and Mercy of the most High.

Secondly, In respect of our selves 'tis profitable to call our past Sins to remembrance; and that for these three Reasons: 1. Because by this means we may be Humbled and Abased. 2. That we may be more Watchful and Careful. 3. That we may be inspired with Zeal and Vigour for the suture.

A word of each of these.

First, I say, the Remembrance of former Sins will abase and humble us; it will cause us to think meanly of our selves. Thus the Church professes, in Lam. 3. 19, 20. Remembring my Affliction, or (as other Copies read it) my Unrighteousness; (however if we adhere to our own Translation, we may well suppose, that Sin is included here in the next word [Misery], and so indeed this Word signifies sometimes: And besides, we may inform our selves that the Church continually, in this her Lamentation, joins her Sins and her Afflictions together, and so the former may be couch'd in the latter) Remembring my Unrighteousness, and also the Ga Worm-

Wormwood and the Gall, (which are the sad and doleful, the bitter and grievous Consequences of Sin). My Soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This in its own nature is the happy Issue of a serious Resecting on former Sins, viz. to make Men more humble and low in their Thoughts. The true Penitent debases himself under the Consideration of that Folly which he hath been guilty of, of that Unkindness and Ingratitude which he hath expressed toward God, of that Rebellion and Disobedience which he knows he hath heretofore practised against the Lord of Heaven and Earth. This will be always an essectual Expedient to check all Pride and Haughtiness in him.

Secondly, This will make us more watchful over our selves, more fearful to offend God, and more careful to fly unto him for his Aid and Affiltance, and to crave it with all importunity. will cause us more ardently to desire his Directions in all our ways, and to be more ready to comply with them, and more wary and circumfpect in our Behaviour in the whole course of our Lives. The Shipwrack'd Mariner will dread the Storms for the future, and be more careful how he steers his Course, and where he ventures his Vessel. He that hath felt the Miseries of a long Sickness, and hath labourd under the Pains and Tortures of a difeafed Body, will, when he is recovered, be more watchful to preserve his Health, and use fuch Means as may keep up a hale Plight of Body; and this he doth the more effectually, by calling to mind the uneasy Circumstances of his former Condition, and what Pains and Troubles he under-went, and how defirous he then was to be freed from them. Do you then, my Brethren,

with

think of the Obliquities of your past Lives, and of the unspeakable Danger you then lay under; and by this you will grow Cautious and Vigilant for the time to come: You will be more afraid of the Spiritual Sickness and Disease, than of the Bodily one; and you will be very sollicitous to prevent a

Relapse.

Thirdly, The Remembrance of your former Sins will make you not only careful of not returning to the same, or the like Follies, but it will alfo make you more Zealous in all your future Enterprises and Actions. The time past of our life, saith the Apostle, may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, I Pet. 4. 3. But now, faith he, verse 7. Be sober, and watch unto prayer: have fervent charity among your selves; and in the following part of the Epistle he stirs them up to the exercise of all Christian Graces. As much as to fay, The Confideration of your past Life should excite you to be Vigorous and Active in all the remaining part of your time which God shall allot you. Thus in respect of our felves, it is advantageous and useful to bear our former Miscarriages in our Memories.

Thirdly, It is so likewise in respect of others. Remembrance of our Sins will make us Merciful and Compassionate towards those who are not yet rescued from the Captivity of Satan, and the Strength of their own prevailing Lusts. For we having a Sense of their Condition, cannot but be induced to behave our selves mildly and gently toward them, and to win them by Christian Charity. The Apostle's Argument is very well worth your taking notice of, in Tit. 3. 3. (and perhaps you never observed the Connection of that Verse

with the foregoing one) For we our felves also, faith he, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceiv'd, ferving divers lufts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, kateful, and hating one another. The word for, in the Front of this Text, acquaints us, that what is here faid is the Reason of what was said before; or that it is an Argument to inforce it. The Apostle said, Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no Man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all Men. And then he immediately adds, For we our felves alfo, &c. As if he had faid, Learn to submit to your Superiours, obey all their lawful Commands, and fee that you be mild and gentle to all Persons, tho' they be Strangers to the Covenant of Grace; govern your Tongues, and take all occasions of doing good: You have reason to behave your selves thus, when you confider what your former Carriage hath been, how you indulged your selves in Vice, and forgot your Duty towards God and Man. Thus I conceive I have rightly and truly reprefented to you the Meaning of the Apostle, and you see how pertinent it is to our present Purpose. If Men would call to mind their own former Faults, and reflect on their past Offences, and withall look into their present Failings, they would be more Mild and Gentle, more Affable and Loving to their Brethren, though they highly offend both God and them. They would speak evil of no Man; that is, they would not uncharitably and cenforioufly cry out against any Man, when they confider how Evil they have been themselves. Those who have been too unhappily acquainted with the ways of Vice, and by the Divine Grace are renewed and reformed, should learn (especially as often

often as they call their Sins to mind) to have Compassion on others, and not to be rash in their Judgments and Determinations concerning them, not to pass a Sentence of Death on lesser Delinquents, perhaps, than themselves have been, but to be Sober and Modest, and sparing in their Censures, to admonish their Brethren in Charity, to pity their Fellow-servants, to forgive their Failings, and to desire God to forgive them; for if they themselves have obtained Mercy, why may they not hope that their Brother may do so to? And thus you see how Advantageous a thing it is to call your Sins to remembrance, and thereby to give at the same time an Evidence of your true

Repentance.

From what I have faid let me make these two short Inferences, and then I will pass to the next Head of my Discourse. The first Inference concerns the Ministers of the Gospel; the second the whole Body of Christians. First, Ministers and Guides of Souls are hence authoriz'd, to reflect on the former State of those who are their Charge, to remind them of their past Failures and Offences. Herein they follow the Example of the great St. Paul: Writing to his Corinthians, he useth this Reflection, I Epistle 6. Chap. 11. Ver. Such were some of you; i.e. ye were heretofore guilty of these Sins which I have named; ye were wicked and prophane, and lived as without God in the World. And after the like manner he deals with the Ephefians, 2. chap. 2, 3. verses, In times past ye walked according to the course of this world, &c. And again, ver. 11, 12. Remember that ye were in times past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Ifrael, and strangers from the Covenant of Promise, and without God

God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ. And again in the 5th Chapter of that Epiftle, ver. 8. Te were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. This also is the Apostle's way of dealing with the Coloffians, 1. chap. 21. ver. You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. And in the 3d Chap. Verses 6, 7, 8. For which things Take the wrath of God comes on the Children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked sometimes, when ye lived in them: But now ye also put off all these, &c. Thus we see the Apostle thought fit to put his Converts in mind of their former graceless Condition: He sets their past Sins before them. And in this the Instructers of Souls, the Ministers of Christ, may very commendably imitate him,

yea, they ought to do it.

Secondly, This concerns you all: Your Duty lies clear before you. If you would give Proof of the Truth of your Repentance, see that you pass not an act of Oblivion in respect of your former Sins; but be continually looking back upon them, and calling them to remembrance. Keep them in your View; lodge them in your Memory, that by your considerate reflecting on them, you may be more Humble and Lowly, more Careful and Circumspect, more Pitiful and Compassionate to others, who are in their natural State; that you may pray for them, use gentleness towards them, and shew Charity unto them. God is said, in the stile of Scripture, to cast our Sins behind his back; and by this is fignified his Pardoning and Forgiving our Sins; but tho' he casts our Sins behind him, they must be ever before us, they must be remembred by us. They whom God hath effectually call'd, must ftill

still think of their former Miscarriages, and of the danger and misery they were obnoxious to. Now when they are in the Haven, they ought to remember the perillous Sea they were in. God commands the Israelites, that, when they shall arrive in Canaan, they remember their former Bondage in Egypt. Thus, tho' you are set free from the Bondage, you must be mindful of your former Thraldom and Distress. In a word, you that would evidence to your selves the reality of your Repentance, see that you do it by this Effett & Fruit of it, the calling of past Sins to remembrance. And so much for the 1st particular.

2. As we must call our Sins to remembrance, so we must do it with shame and blushing; and therefore the next Effect or Fruit of true Repentance I assign to be this, namely, Shame. But that you may not Mistake, I must let you understand what I mean by it. You must know then, that Shame is found either in bad Men, or good Men. As it is in bad Men, it is either a Vice, or a Punishment. First, it is a Vice; and so it is no other than a being assamed of what is good and righteous, just and holy, of what is our real Duty, and our best Interest, a being ashamed of God's Name and Cause, of that which we ought to glory and boast of; and consequently it is a shame which a Man is to be asham'd of. That excellent Moralist Plutarch hath

a Treatise of this \* Faulty Shamefacedness, and he makes it one Extream of
the commendable Vertue of Modesty. This is
when a Man is ashamed of that which is good and
laudable, yea, which is necessary and indispensable. Pudens prave, such a one is call'd by Horace:
He is ashamed to do what he ought to do; which
is a depraved and sinful Modesty. This the Apocryphal Writer warns us against, Eccl. 4.20. Be

not ashamed when it concerneth thy Soul. And he adds, There is a shame that bringeth fin, and there is a shame which is glory and grace, ver. 21. The former is a being ashamed of Goodness and Holiness; the latter is to be ashamed of Sin, and doing a wicked Act; of which I shall speak anon. It is the former which I am now speaking of, and 'tis too frequently found among Men in the World: They are not ashamed to act viciously, and to dishonour their Maker, but they are ashamed of Vertue and Goodness, and the open professing and owning of them. This is called, by our Saviour, a being aham'd of him and his words, Mark 8. 38. And there he informs us what will be the doleful Issue of it; of fuch Persons shall the Son of Man be asham'd, when be cometh in the glory of his Father, with all his hely Angels.

Again, As Shame is a Sin, so it is also a Punishment of Sin; and thus it denotes these three things: First, Regret and Torment of Mind. Shame is a troublesome Passion, and brings great disturbance and vexation of Soul with it. It is caused by the Sinners looking into himself; and

\* Erlpémur & Erlpéms-& Erlpéms-& orubefcere, pudore ofici : item inflecti, invertere. therefore the same \* Greek Word signifies, to turn inwards, and to be asham'd. This is usually the just Penalty of Sinners. Secondly, It denotes an outward and visible Discovery of that inward Passion. And this Discovery is made in Sinners, by consusion of Face,

Trembling of Body, by running away and hiding themfelves. This, with the inward Shame before mention'd, is oftentimes the attendant of Sinners. You read in Gen. 2. ver. the last, that Adam and Eve, before their Fall, though they were naked,

were

were not asham'd; but it was their Sin that was the cause of their shame afterwards; and Cloathing was made to cover that fhame; as we read in Gen. 3. 7. that our first Parents, those Primitive Offenders, fewed Fig-leaves together for that purpose; yea, the Leaves would not ferve them, but they hid themselves among the Trees. But alas, a whole Grove was not thick enough to conceal the Sinners, or their Sin. Fear and Shame, and Diforder posses'd them, and they were equally confounded as if all their Posterity had been there present, and gazing on them. And after the same manner the finful Sons of Adam fare very often: Shame and Confusion are their Portion. This is implied by the Pfalmist in these Words, Pfal. 119.6. Then shall I not be confounded when I have respect to all thy Commandments; as much as to fay, That those who have no respect to God's Commandments, shall meet with Shame and Confusion. Not that these are always the reward of Sin, as is represented to us by the Prophet Jeremiah, 6. chap. 15. ver. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blub. Neither Prophets nor People had any Confternation on their Minds; and there was no fign of Shame in their Countenances and outward Behaviours. They fcorn'd to hide their Heads: they carried it off with all Effrontery and Impudence. This generally accompanies a hardned Heart, and an obdurate Spirit. But great numbers of Sinners find it otherwise with them, they are confounded and amazed, they are cast down and dismay'd.

But thirdly, As Shame signifies some thing in themselves, so it signifies Disgrace and Disrespect shew'd to them from others. Shame is sometimes

in Scripture oppos'd to Honour and Repute; and this also is the due Recompense of Sinners very often. They are faid to be brought to hame, Pfalm 71. 24. and to be clothed with shame, Pfal. 26. 8. The Wife Man hath affured us, that shame is the promotion of fools, Prov. 3. 35. that is, of the wicked. They meet with open Contempt and Difgrace, Reproach and Ignominy; they are hooted at, and made a Mock and Derision. It is thus in the nature of the thing it felf: For Wickedness makes Men flighted and difrespected; it renders them contemptible and vile. As Sin is the Reproach of any People, (according to Solomon) fo 'tis the Reproach of any particular Person: It really defames and disgraces any Man, because it is in it self base and dishonourable. Thus I have consider'd Shame as it is in Evil Men.

Now in the next place I shall consider it in good . Men, and that these two ways; first, as it hath a relation to Sin for the future; and so Shame, implanted in them by God, is a great Bridle unto Sin; it restrains their undue Desires and Inclinations which they are liable to. This wonderfully checks those unlawful Appetites, which otherwise would break forth into extravagant Actions. This Shame is of great use, because there always goes along with it an ingenuous fear of doing base and unworthy things. Blusbing, which is the companion of this Shame, was rightly call'd, by Diogenes the Cynick, the Colour of Vertue; for by this good Men are vertuously disposed, and they are always kept from fallying forth into lewd and wicked Enterprises: They are made to startle at some Sins especially, and so to draw back as never to come near them again.

Again, Shame may be confider'd as it hath relation to Sin past; and so it is a Sign and Fruit of true Repentance. Thus you fee how largely this Word is taken : And I thought fit to give you this Account, because it will help you to understand the distinct meaning of it. It is the last of these acceptions of the word which I am concerned in at present, viz. as it is the Fruit of godly Repentance; for though Shame be the refult of Sin, yet it may be made the happy effect of Repentance. As there is a Shame that is the Penalty of Sin, fo there is a Shame that is the Fruit of Evangelical and Godly Sorrow. This is an undeniable Maxim, That a true Penitent is ashamed of his former evil ways. The Language of Repentance is that of Ezra, (9. 6.) I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, O my God. And observe how the Apostle speaks to the Converted Romans; What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? Rom. 6. 21. Now fince your Conversion you can't but remember your Sins with Shame; you Blush at that which before you gloried in: And this is no small Evidence of your true Repentance. There is then a Praise-worthy and Christian Shame, which is the effect of Godly Sorrow, and of Turning unto God. This is when a Man is displeas'd with himself for what he hath done, and hangs down his Head, and is unspeakably abath'd, when he confiders that he might and ought to have done otherwise, and that it was his own Fault that he acted as he did. This Shame comes from the fense and apprehension of his having done that which was unfeemly and unfit to be done; that which by no means he should have enterpris'd, if he had seriously weighed things with himself, and consider'd Dealing would be in the end Prespectivand the Station he was in, and the Duty he was ob-

lig'd to perform.

Try then the Truth and Reality of your Repentance by this. Do you, as often as you reflect on your former evil ways, find this Shame in you? Do you feel your felves abash'd and confounded at the remembrance of your past Offences? To be particular, when any of you call to mind the Intemperance and Excess which you have been guilty of heretofore, are you asham'd within your selves, that you acted so brutishly, that you indulged your felves in fuch disorders and extravagancies, that you offended God and good Men, and brought a scandal on Christianity? Doth the serious Consideration of these things call up Blushes into your Faces? Or when you look back on your lives, and take notice of the Lasciviousness, Lewdness and Uncleanness which you have been guilty of, doth Shame cover your Faces on the thoughts of your Transgressing in so high and heinous a manner, of your wilfully pursuing the Lusts of the Flesh, and gratifying your carnal Defires, and being swallowed up with Sensuality, and never minding the great End and Design of your living in the World, viz. to provide for the welfare of your Souls, to make fure of another and a better Life, and by Purity and Chastity to fit your selves for it? Can you refrain from Blushing, when you think how like Beasts, rather than Men, you have acted.

Do those of you who have been guilty of Injustice and Oppression, of Cheating and Defrauding, remember these Crimes with Shame and Confusion of Face? What advantage and profit did you think would accrue to you by fuch evil Practices? Could you reasonably imagine that your unjust Dealing would be in the end Prosperous and Suc-

cessful ?

cessful? Could you be so besotted and sensies as not to consider, that the Vengeance of Heaven awaits all such unlawful Practises? Could you not discern even by the light of common Reason, and the natural Dictates of Conscience, that it was highly Criminal to hurt and endamage your Neighbours, to injure your Brethren, and to do that to them which you would by no means be done to your selves? Are you not asham'd at such Resections as these? I hope you are; and this you may reckon as one good Sign of Repentance.

Again, Are there any here that have used their Mouths to prophane Swearing, and yet are not now asham'd at the remembrance of this vile Sin? How Impious a thing is it to abuse the Sacred Name of God in Oaths and Curses? What a prodigious Madness is it to affront the most High after this manner? What Excuse can be invented for a Sin that hath no Pleasure, or Profit, or Preferment, to tempt Men to it? Say that they are stirred up by Passion and Wrath; and thence it is that they belch out Oaths; those are the product of Choler, and a Fiery Spirit: But what unaccountable a thing is this, that because they are incensed by Men, they should therefore reak their Passion on the God of Heaven? Must they abuse, prophane and injure God, because Man hath displeas'd them? O think of the gross madness and folly of this Sin, you that have been guilty of it, and let the deepest Blushes arise in your Faces for it. And fo whatever other past Sin it is that you call to mind, be throughly asham'd of it. I beseech you be not so forgetful of your selves and of your duty as to be corrupted by the impudent and daring Carriage of this Degenerate Age, wherein you fee H 2 Men

Men notoriously Sin, and commit the foulest Crimes, and yet look the World in the Face, and venture to shew their hardned Foreheads, and find no dejection in their Spirits, after all they have This certainly is a great Symptom of Ruin and Destruction. O that none of you may be of the number of these bold and frontless Men! Tho' you have been Sinners, yet now be asham'd that vou were so. Some natural Philosophers tell us, That no Creature blushes but Man; and the Moral Philosophers will give the Reason of it; Because none hath a Sense of good and evil, honesty or turpitude, but Man. But this is beyond all Difpute, That no Man blushes with a deeper dye than a Penitent Sinner, and the more if he hath committed Sin heretofore with great Confidence and Daring. Let this fruit of Repentance be feen in all of you, I intreat you. Let an Ingenuous and Child-like Shame be never separated from your offending so gracious a Father.

3ly, Another Effect and Fruit of Gospel-Repentance is a humble Accepting of the Punishment of our Sins. This is made a Character of Repentance, and a Condition of Mercy, in Lev. 26. 41. If their uncircumcifed Hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the Punishment of their Iniquities; and again, ver. 43. And what is this accepting of the Punishment of our Iniquities, but a submitting our selves patiently to God's Hand, and taking particular notice of the Justice of God in afflicting us for our Sins? After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, thou hast punish'd us less than our Iniquities deserve. This was the humble and penitential Language of Ezra, in behalf of himfelf and the Jews, Ezra 19. 13. And thus Nebemiah expresses himself, Howbeit, thou art Just in all. all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly, Neh. 9. 33. This is the genuine Voice of true Penitents, of all those who are heartily forry for their Sins. Having offended the Divine Majesty, they humbly prostrate themselves before him, and entirely resign themselves to his Pleasure. They know that it is unreasonable to repine and murmur at Heaven; for whatever befalls them is short of what they have deserved. Thus you find the Church deporting her felf, Lam. 3. 26, &c. It is good that a Man hould both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of God. It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his youth. He fitteth alone and keepeth filence, because he hath born it upon him: he putteth his Mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. All this is here set down to fet forth the Church's humble Submission of her felf to the Divine Disposal, and her contented bearing and undergoing of whatfoever God shall think fit to inflict upon her. And in Verse 39. this is farther explain'd, Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins? It is a favour that he is alive; and if he also considers, that he is punished for his Sins, and so there is nothing he fuffers, but what is just and equal, and what he hath merited, he hath no Cause to Complain and Murmur. This then I offer as one mark of true Repentance; viz. a submitting to the Penalty of our Faults, and justifying God in all his Severities towards us. It is to be reckon'd, without doubt, as a fignal Proof of Jonah's being Penitent for the great Sin which he had committed in flying unto Tarshish from the Presence of the Lord, when he was commanded to go to Nineveh; it is, I say, a signal Proof of his Repentance, that he so willingly and readily submitted to that Pu-H 3 nishment

nishment which was allotted him, yea, rather which he chose himself, saying, Take me up, and

cast me forth into the Sea.

I might under this Head add this likewise, that a humble, meek, and patient demeanour of our felves toward Men, those who have been instrumental, and even active in affiiching and troubling us is a good Sign of Godly Repentance. Therefore you may observe, that after submitting unto God, express'd in those forecited Verses in Lam. 3. submitting unto Men is adjoin'd, ver. 30. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach; that is, he being heartily forry for his Sins against God, is ready to fuffer any thing from Men, he is willing to be reproached and vilified, to be smitten and persecuted. He gives Evidence of a hearty Repentance by fuch deportment as this. A true Penitent passeth by Affronts and Injuries, overlooks Obloquies and Taunts, forgives all evil Usage, he is content to be reviled and evilly intreated; for he remembers that he hath, by his Offences against God, merited Punishments of all kinds, and he knows that the bad Usage which he finds at Mens hands, is by the Permission and Providence of God, and that whatever they do, or he suffers, shall be for his real good and Advantage. Therefore the Godly Penitent resigns himself and his whole Condition to the Will of the Supreme Governour of the World.

I proceed now to the Fourth Effect or Fruit of Gospel-Repentance, and that is a firm Resolving against Sin for the future. The Language of all Penitents is that of Joshua, As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord; i. e. we are resolved on serving God, and nothing shall divert us.

holy David for an eminent Example of this, Pfalm 39. 1. I faid (i. e. I firmly purpose) I will take heed to my ways. And fo in Pfal. 119. 57. I have faid that I will keep thy words. And higher fill, in 106. ver, of that Pfalm, I have fworn, and I will perform it. Of Job we read that he made a Covenant with his Eyes; the meaning is, he took up firm Resolves and Purposes to shut out all lustful and lascivious Thoughts, and to prevent all lewd and diffolute Actions: and in order to both these, to lay a restraint on his Senses, especially on his Sight, which he had found to be a great inlet to Vice. The Heart of a fincere Penitent is resolved : He abounds with serious Promises and Vows unto God, that he will be more strict in the future part of his Life, and shun those Vices which he was formerly addicted to, that he will make Religion his great Bufiness and Employment, that he will, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements, spend his whole Life in the Service of God, and in taking care of his immortal Soul. These are the pious Resolves and Purposes of that Man who attained this Grace, and arrived to this duty of Evangelical Repentance: The Lord youchfafe to grant, that we may all of us give Proof of our being true Gospel Penitents, by feeling in our Hearts the fame holy Purposes and Resolutions.

The next (which is the Fifth) Effect or Fruit of Godly Repentance, is ardent Prayer and Supplication. This I prove from Zech. 12. 10. In that day I will pour upon the House of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, &c. Here you may observe, that the spirit of Supplications is an effect or concomitant of the Spiritual and Godly Mourn-

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ing. The true Penitential Mourner is a humble Petitioner at the Throne of Grace; and that for these two great Bleffings especially, namely, Pardon of Sin, and Strength against it. First, The Repenting Soul begs Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin. For though Repentance it felf be the Condition of Pardon, yet Prayer is the Medium and Channel by which this fingular Mercy is conveyed to us. God will be fought unto for all Bleffings and Favours; and for this in a more particular manner. Which is intimated to us in those Words of the Pfalmist, Pfal. 32. 5. I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin : for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee: Every godly Penitent gives Evidence of his having truly repented, by his crying mightily for the Pardon of his Sins, his past and his present Transgressions. Yea, and he must beg, that God would graciously please to discover and make known unto him the actual Forgiveness of his Sins, that thereby he may be cheared and comforted, and have ground of great Contentment and Satisfaction in -his Mind, to what east of he will bent some

Again, As the true Penitent prays for Forgiveness of Sin, so likewise for Strength against Sin: His continual Supplications are for Power and Might to oppose Sin and Satan with good Success, to resist mansully the Temptations of the Evil Spirit, and to vanquish that implacable Enemy of his Soul. If we have heartily repented of our Evil ways, we shall be stirred up to request daily the aid and help of the Holy Ghost; to beseech him, that he would pity the Weakness of our Nature, and have Compassion on our Instrmities; and knowing how weak we are, that he would strengthen me by his might in the inner Man, and give us Power

Power to withstand the assaults of Satan, and to discharge all the parts of our Religion with easiness and alacrity, with pleasure and delight; that he would vouchfafe to direct and lead us in all the Paths of Righteousness; and when we meet with Difficulties and Dangers, that he would be pleafed to uphold and support us, and to conduct us fafely thro' them, by his own Almighty Arm, and Irrefistable Power. But in Prayer there is not only Petition, but Confession: That therefore is the next thing I am to speak of.

6ly, Then, hearty Confession of Sin is an inseperable Fruit of true Repentance. If we are heartily grieved for our past Offences, and find a godly Remorfe in our Souls for them, we shall not be backward to acknowledge them, and to unburden our selves of them, by a free Confession.

of Seneça is too true, \* We love our Vices, saith he; and hence it is that we defend them; we have more mind to make Excuses for them, than to abandon them, and lay them aside. This is the guife and fashion of all Sinners before they have arrived to the Grace of Repentance. They cover their Transgressions as Adam, Job 31. 33. In

\* Vitia noftra, quia amamus, defendimus : & malumus excusare illa quam excutere. Epiit. 117.

which place that holy Man reckons it as one Sign of his Repentance and Integrity, that he did not hide his Iniquity in his Bosom, that he did not cover his Sin as Adam did, who, you know, being conscious of his guilt, began presently to retire, and conceal himself, and even to shrowd himself from the Presence of God, if it were possible. And when God appear'd to him, and call'd him to an Account, he was still ready to cover his Transgression: He excused his Sin by laying it on the Woman; and in that also tacitly impeach'd the Almighty himself. The Woman that thou gavest me, she gave me of the fruit, and I did eat; as much as to say, If thou hadst not given me the Woman, I should have been Innocent; so that my Sin redounds upon thee. And Eve likewise, when she came to be Examined, and when her Sin was laid to her charge, covered and excused it by transferring it on the Serpent; The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. Thus excusing and putting off Sin, was in the World as soon as Sin it self. The extenuating and cloaking of it began with our first Parents.

And their Posterity ever since have learnt to palliate their Sins, and shift them off one way or other: They accuse God himself, and impeach his Decrees and Providence. They lay the fault on Satan, as if his Temptations were fo forcible that they could not be refifted. They charge their Neighbours with their Crimes, as if their Counfels and Examples were the only Cause of their Sins. In short, They impute and ascribe their Wickedness to any but themselves. In this they shew themselves to be the true Children and Offspring of Adam, they tread exactly in his Steps, they take him for their Pattern, their way is to turn over their Crimes to others. Nay, they will pretend some unknown Cause of their Miscarriages, rather than they will take it on themselves. I cast the Gold into the fire, saith Aaron, and there came out this Calf, (Exod. 32. 23.) As if it were made without hands, as if it had that shape of it felf. This was faid to cover their gross Idolatry, and to excuse themselves.

Thus to this day Sinners invent Pleas and Pretences for their evil doings; they never want some Umbrage Umbrage or Cloak for their Misdemeanors. The Adulterer, the Swearer, the Oppressor, the Drunkard, the proud Man, all these have some Excuse and Shift for their particular Crimes. The Fornicator and Adulterer plead the natural Propensity of Flesh and Blood; and this they think will bear them out.

The Swearer excuses himself by pleading the Custom of the place, the Fashionableness of that Sin, and likewise that he intends no harm by all his Oaths and Curses; for he discharges these Vollies oftentimes without any thinking and premedi-

tation.

The covetous Miser, who hath as little to say for himself as any Person whatsoever, yet is not without his Excuse; and it is this, That he doth not know but that he may live to be a very Old Man, and may be cast upon difficult times, and therefore it is Policy and Prudence to lay up a Stock against those Days; and that can't be done

without pinching and grinding.

The Drunkard is not destitute of a sair Pretence and Excuse, as he esteems it to be; he will tell us, that he loves not Drinking for it self; he cares not for it so much on its own account as for the Company and Converse he meets with; and certainly this cannot be culpable, because Man is a Sociable Creature. Or if you can prove it upon these Persons, that they are more in love with the Drink than with the Company, yet then they make this Apology for themselves, That their Constitution requires an extraordinary Cup; or, that they have so used themselves to Drinking, that now they can't refrain from it, without prejudicing their Bodies; they should be Sick if they be not half-drunk; so that Wine is become Physick to

them: And who can blame them for being their own Physicians?

The Proud Man (for he shall come in the last place, because he is so forward always to be in the sirst) no less than other Sinners, hath a way of covering and excusing his Vice. He pleads his Merits, and saith, 'tis sit that others should acknowledge them, and therefore pay that Reverence and Regard which is due to the Possessor of those Merits. He insists, that 'tis the Character of a generous Mind, and a great Soul, to aspire to Honour and Dignity, to be in love with Applause and Acclamation, to breath after Fame and Repute, to be ambitious of Preferments; and, when they are attain'd, to despise those sneaking Spirits, to trample on those groveling Souls, which affest

to be contented with their mean State.

Thus every Sinner is ready to plead for himfelf, and to excuse his Fault: They are never without one Pretence or other, be it never fo mean. " I " did not commit the Fact; or if I did it, it was on not ill done of me; or if I did ill, it was not much; or if it was much, yet I had a good end and design in it; as a Devout Father reprefents the Practise of Sinners in this Case. They have always fomething to fay, though it be to little purpose. It was the Impudent Harlot, Prov. 30. 20. that wiped her Mouth, and faid, he had done no Wickedness; and truly it is the Custom even of all Impenitent Persons, though they have not the Confidence to deny the thing it self which they have done, yet to defend the Lawfulness of it, at least to excuse it, and by some false Name to disguise the Sin. This shews the depraved Temper of Mankind, namely, that they are more ashamed of Confessing and Discovering their Sins, than of

Committing them. But those who have felt a found Remorfe for their Sins, and have truly repented of them, are otherwise inclined: Those who are throughly convinced of Sin, and of the evil of it, freely acknowledge and disclose it; for Confession of Sin is an inseparable Concomitant

of true Repentance.

And this Confession is twofold; either Private, or Publick. The Private Confessing of Sin is likewife double; for it is either to God, or to Men. The confessing of our Sins to God, is our laying open our Hearts and Lives before him, and freely and impartially pouring out our Souls in a full and entire Acknowledgment of all our Faults and Offences. When we are retired, then we can more fully and freely discharge this Duty. This was David's Practife, as we see in his Psalms, some of which are made up of Confession of Sin before God in secret. In the 9th Chapter of Daniel is recorded that holy Man's Confession. And this is represented as the Duty of a true Penitent, in that Parable of the Prodigal Son, who came with this humble Confession in his Mouth, Ihave finn'd against Heaven (which may be call'd a Private one, in respect of that more open and publick one which I shall treat of afterwards). Thus we must give Glory unto God by a hearty Acknowledgment of our evil doings: We must hold up our Hands, and cry Guilty at the Bar of God's Tribunal, and Condemn our felves for the demerit and heinousness of our Actions.

If you would know what are the Qualifications of our Confession of Sin to God, take it in these Three Heads: 1. It must come from the Heart. 2. It must be Particular when there is time and leifure for it. 3. It must be accompanied with all the Just Aggravations of our several Sins and Offences.

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1. Our Confession of Sins must proceed from the Heart, it must come from an inward Principle. It is not every Confession and Acknowledgment of our Misdoings, that will be acceptable to God, and be reckoned as a Fruit of hearty Repentance: No, a mere formal Confession, which is only the Service of the Lips, or is wholly extorted by prefent Danger, is of no value. Pharaoh, that wicked and hard-hearted Tyrant, confessed his Sin, and acknowledged that he had provoked God: Yea, Judge, that reprobate Wretch, was brought to a Confession of his bloody Fact; I have sinn'd, saith he, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. Yet neither of these Confessions were accepted, because they came not from a true and genuine Principle, but were the effect of mere Fear and Dread, and was destitute of the Love of Goodness, and the Author of it; and therefore it is impossible that they should be Signs and Badges of a true and sincere Repentance. The true End that a Sinner hould propound to himself in confessing his Sin, is that God may be glorified, and his Justice and Equity vindicated.

2. Another Qualification of our Consession, is, that it must be Particular, and contain an enumeration of all our Sins and Transgressions. The common Course of Men is to deal in General, when they Converse with God and their own Souls. They content themselves with Universals, and never descend to Particulars. They are not unwilling, perhaps, to acknowledge themselves to be Criminals, but they are very loth to pronounce themselves guilty of this or that individual Vice, especially if they have a very great Love for it. But certainly, this hovering way of dealing with themselves is not the right Method that they should

take, and doth not become a true and fincere Penitent. If we would give a convincing Proof of our Repentance, and of our unteigned defire to abandon our Sins, we must more especially take notice of our particular Failings; that is, at one time or other the Confession must extend to every Sin that hath been committed by us, tho' in this or that particular Confession there may be mention only of fin in General, or of one fin perhaps in particular. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy fight, faith the Penitent Pfalmift, Pfal. 51. 4. By this evil he defigns, without doubt, his Murder and Adultery; and the former of them is directly and plainly mention'd in the 14th Verse of that Pfalm; Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God. So Ezra confesses the particular Sins and Enormities which the Jewish People were guilty of, as their Idolatry, and Affinity with Strangers, and the like, Ezra 9.5, Oc. Tho' this perhaps may more properly be referr'd to Publick Confession, you will find Daniel's Confession to be after the same manner, Chap. 9. True Repentance is not content with a general Confession, but descends to Instances of Individual and Particular Sins. Some Sins, it is true, do more deeply wound the Conscience, but every one of them must be acknowledged. When you come to God, the great and good Physician, you must lay open your particular Maladies and Diseases. Assure your selves of this, That he who endeavours to conceal any one Sin, shall have Pardon for none. And it must needs be so, because he that hides one Vice, and will not be induced to confess and forsake it, shews too plainly that he hath an inward Love and Favour for it, which is inconsistent with Pardon. Let this then be remembred in your private Addresses to the God of Hea-

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ven; in the exercise of your secret Devotion (for of this I more especially speak at this time) confess and discover your particular Failings and Offences, and thereby shew that you are heartily touched with a sense of your Sinfulness, and that you have attained to a right Godly Repentance.

3. I add this as another Qualification of a due Confession of our Sins, That it be accompanied with the Just Aggravations of them. As first, This Aggravation of our Sins (of some of them at least) ought to be inferted, that they were committed even against our Knowledge, against a clear Light fhining upon us; and that either natural or revealed. We have in several of our evil Practises done violence to our natural Reasons, we have acted against the inbred Notions and Sentiments of our Minds. There are some Vices and Enormities which are opposite to our very Natures, to Humanity it felf; those therefore that are guilty of these Sins, are very heinous Offenders. Here I might mention those Sins which are said in Scripture to cry; and those are four especially, as Blood-shed, Gen. 4. 10. [The Voice of thy Brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground]. And so the abominable Sin of Sodom is faid to cry, Gen. 18.21. And again, the Egyptians oppressing the Israelites is expressed after this manner, Exad. 3. 9. Lastly, In James 5. 4. 'tis said, that [the hire of the Labourers which is kept back by fraud cries ]. All Sins. fpeak, but some cry; they are very loud and clamorous; they are exceeding grievous and heinous, because our very Natures and our Reasons recoil at them. Ask your selves then whether you have not committed fuch Sins? Whether you have not felt very sensible Reluctancies in your Hearts, and yet have proceeded to accomplish your wicked Purpofes? fes? Have you not known this or that to be a plain Transgression of the Divine Law? Have you not in your own Thoughts and Judgment condemned it as unlawful, and yet have been so befool'd as to venture on the commission of it? Have you not acted against the dictates of your Consciences, and the Fears and Horrors which you have felt there? If thus you have sinn'd, remember to insert this great Aggravation into your Confessions: Acknowledge that you have sinned against your Reason, that you have acted against the light of Nature, and those common Impressions of Good

and Evil which were in your Breafts.

Besides, Acknowledge that you have offended, notwithstanding the Light of Hely Scripture and Revelation; that though these have given you a full and compleat Account of your Duty, yet you have neglected the performance of it. This is no small Aggravation of your fault, that God abundantly revealed his Will and Pleasure to you, and that you have all the means of knowing your Duty, and yet you have finned against all these Discoveries. That a Man's Sin is so much the more grievous and heinous by how much he is the more enlightned, is the plain determination of St. James, 4. chap. 17. ver. To him that knoweth to do well, and doth it not, to him it is fin; i.e. it is beyond measure finful and wicked. To fall in the Day time, when the Sun shines so bright, and the Way is plain and even, is an inexcufable Crime: To fin against clear Convictions and Discoveries, is one of the greatest Inhansements of our guilt that can be.

Again, If you have finned against signal Mercies and Favours, let that also be confessed by you. It was a huge Aggravating of Noah's Drunkenness, that it was immediately after his coming out

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of the Ark, after his being fav'd from the Deluge, which swept away all the World besides him and his Family. To be deliver'd from the Raging Flood, and then to be drown'd in Drink was a very fad Reflection to him without doubt. And fo in the like manner Lot's committing Incest, and that prefently after his being rescued from the Conflagration of Sodom, render'd his Sin extreamly heinous and flagitious. To be deliver'd from that devouring Fire, and then to scorch himself with more impure Flames, could not but be a grievous and aftonishing Consideration. It was a fad and shameful Requital which David made the most High, when, after he had taken him from the Sheepfold, and prefer'd him to be Pastor and Ruler of his People, he defiled himself with Adultery and Bloodshed. How did Hezekiah requite the fingular Mercy of God, in delivering him from going down to the Pit, by boafting and glorying of his Treasures, and not trusting in God?

Likewise, 'tis a great inhansement of our Guilt, if we sin when we are environ'd with Judgments and Punishments from Heaven: For these were design'd to teach us Righteousness, to remind us effectually of our Duty, to check us for our neglect of it, to reclaim us from unlawful courses, and to stir us up to a hearty pursuit of Holiness. Now if the design of God's severe Dealings with us be perverted by us, yea, if we grow worse by them, and make them an occasion of our being more desperate in our commission of Sin, then certainly we aggravate our Guilt, and this, when we come to lay open our Condition before God, must be acknowledg'd by us.

Another Amplification of Sins is, that they are committed against solutions and ferious Purposes. These are great and powerful Obligations on us to serve God, and discharge our Duty; and therefore if we break these, we increase our Sins, and marvellously add to our Guilt.

Further, If we have sin'd against the Advice and Counsel, and the urgent Entreaties and Exhortations of those who tender'd our Welfare, let us own this as another grievous Circumstance of our Fail-

ings.

Moreover, To sin against Grace receiv'd is a wonderful inhansement of any Offence. Or, when we reject, oppose and strive against the Grace of the Holy Spirit, we must needs conclude that we

are Sinners of the highest rank.

Again, Sinning against our particular Experience, that is, after we have tasted and seen that God is Good; this cannot but be another heightning of Guilt. For this Reason, Apostacy and Backsliding from the ways of Righteousness, which we once walk'd in, must make our Condition very deplorable, and almost desperate.

Moreover, They that commit gross Sins, and yet do it with a pretence and shew of Holiness, are to

be reckon'd as high Offenders.

This is another Aggravation of Sin, that it hath been committed frequently; and this you must expressly mention in your Confession. The often repeating of Sin exalts our Guilt. The first Offence may be a Slip, a Surprize; but when you commit the same Sins again and again, and continue long in them, there is reason to believe that you are in love with them, and take delight in them, than which there can't be a greater inhanse-

ment of your evil doings. See then that you acknowledge and bewail this. Let your repeating of Sin, and continuance in it, be owned by you

as an high Enormity.

In the next place, let me add this, That when Sin is complicated, and when in one Action is included a double or treble Transgression, and when the Sinner lays a Train and a long Plot for Sin, then undoubtedly there is an unspeakable Aggravation of the Crime. Thus David's Adultery had many other distinct Sins in it; as Idleness, Lying, Drunkenness, (that is, making another Person drunk) Cruelty, Injustice, downright Murder. All these were the Ingredients of that Crying Sin: All these hung together like so many Links in a Chain: All these were retainers to that one great capital Sin. I desire you therefore to peruse that place of Scripture in 1 Kings 15. 5. David did that which was right in the Eyes of the Lord, and turn'd not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the Days of his Life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Did not David turn aside from any thing fave in that matter? Yes furely, for we read that he committed a very heinous Sin in numbering the People: And if we may judge of the Sin by the Punishment that attended it, it was a most provoking Crime; for it was punish'd with a raging Pestilence that swept away Seventy Thousand Men, 1 Chron. 21. It is evident then that David did turn aside from something, besides what he did in the matter of Uriah: How then shall we understand this Text? I conceive (with submission) that the place should be render'd thus; He turned not aside from all things that God commanded him: For in the Hebrew it is miccol, from all, or from every thing. David turn'd not aside from every thing

thing which God commanded him, unless it were in the case of Uriah. As much as to say, that in that one Sin he transgress'd All the Commandments; he did as it were break the whole Law. I have told you already how many Sins were contain'd in it: It was a complex Crime, divers Sins concurr'd to the making up that great and enormous one; and this without doubt was no mean

Aggravation of David's Guilt.

And the same Sacred History informs you how many wily Circumstances prepar'd the way for Ammon's committing Folly with his Sifter Tamar, 2 Sam. 13. and in every one of those preparative Contrivances, there was interpretatively something of that great Sin of Incest. There are some collective Sins, there are accumulative Vices; such a one is Perjury in some cases: Swearing falfly may not only ruine a fingle Person as to his Estate and Life, but at the same time it may undo a whole Family, yea, it may be mischievous to a whole City or Town, yea, to a whole Kingdom. So I might shew, that in other Sins, as Oppression, and the like, there is a compound of many Evils, a conjunction and club of several distinct Vices: and this most certainly cannot but aggravate the nature and quality of fuch Sins; and when the Penitent comes to acknowledge them, he is strictly obliged to mention this Aggravation.

Lastly, Boasting and glorying in Sin, and sitting in the Seat of the Scorners, i.e. impudently making a Mock of Sin, is as great an Aggravation as any that I have named. This therefore (as well as the rest) ought to be inserted into the Confession of true Mourners for Sin. They must not forget to leave out any of the material Circumstances which they know their Sins were at-

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tended with. And this I mention as most proper in our private and secret Confession of our Faults unto God, because then there will be no Spectators or Hearers to observe us; then we may with all freedom open our Breafts. Besides, then we may best perform this part of our Duty when we can affure our felves that we do it in Sincerity, between God and our felves, and not out of oftentation, and to be heard of Men. And perfwade your felves of this, that this confessing the feveral Circumstances of your ungodly Actions, and loading them with the most aggravating Titles, will conduce to your greater and deeper Humiliation for your Sins. This will make you more sensible of your unworthiness, and cause you to proclaim it with great earnestness, as 70b did, Behold I am vile, Job 40. 4. as David did, I am as a beaft before thee, Pfal. 73. 22. as Agur did, I am more brutish than any man, Prov. 30. 2. and as an eminent Convert did, who had been a very heinous Offender, I am the least of the Apostles, faith he, and the greatest of Sinners. Thus far I have treated of the first fort of Confession, namely, a private confessing of our Sins unto God: For Confession must be made unto Him primarily and principally, because he is the chief Party offended; therefore David cries out in his Penitential Pfalm, Against thee, thee only have I sinned. And it is God alone that can unerringly forgive Sin, and absolve us from the guilt of it.

But I must add, that there is also a private Confession of Sins unto Men; and this, as well as the former, is one Fruit of Repentance. This Confessing of Sin must be in these two Cases:

1. Where we have privately injured our Neighbours.

2. When we desire to have our Consciences

eafed

eased and comforted. First, I say, in case of private Injuries between Man and Man, the acknowledging and confessing those Injuries is required of every one who would have an Affurance of his Repentance. Christ Jesus, who is the Founder of that Holy Religion which we profess, hath made this our necessary Duty, as we may inform our selves from Luke 17. 3, 4. If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, check him for his Fault, and shew him the errour of his doings; and if he repent, forgive him, pass by his Fault upon his repenting of it. But what is this Repentance, and how shall it appear that the trespassing Brother doth repent of the Injury he hath done? Our Saviour will fatisfy us as to this in the next words: If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. From whence it is clear, that the Offender is oblig'd to come and fay, I repent; that is, he must acknowledge that he hath offended against his Brother. This Law of Christ requires, that he that hath done an Injury should own and confess it to the Party injur'd. And this feems to be the meaning of our Saviour in Mat. 5. 23, 24. If thou bring thy Gift to the Aliar, (he speaks to the Jews, who used to bring Oblations, and lay them on the Altar) and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, that is, that he is justly offended at thee because of some Wrong which thou hast done him, leave there thy Gift before the Altar (lay thy Oblation aside, offer it not on the Altar) and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. To be reconcil'd to his Brother, is the same with faying, he repents. He must acknowledge the Wrong and Injury which he hath done, and express his iensensibleness of it. Upon these two Texts I ground the expediency, if not the necessity of confessing our Faults to the Parties offended; and I reckon

it as one Sign and Effect of Repentance.

Again, Confession of Sin, and that unto Men, is to be made when the Conscience is troubled and perplexed, and when we desire to have it satisfied and eased. And this laying open of our Wounds and Maladies may either be to a Godly Minister and Discreet Guide of Souls, or to some Understanding and Compassionate Neighbour or Friend, who hearing our Case, and being acquainted with our Condition, may administer suitable Comfort to us, and put us into the way of receiving Refreshment for our troubled Minds.

First, I say, open and uncover your Wounds, discover the Maladies and Diseases of your Souls to the Pastor of your Church. He is the Spiritual Physician, and hath Licence and Authority from Heaven to practice in this Divine Art and Cure of Souls. I am not now preaching up Auricular Confession, that is, a formal dropping in of all your Sins into the Priest's Ear once or twice in a Year; but this is what I commend to your pra-Rice, that when you find your Consciences perplex'd and disturb'd, when you labour and are heavy laden with your Sins, you are obliged to repair to the faithful Ministers and Dispensers of holy Things, and to unload your Burden into their Bosoms, and freely and ingenuously impart your Case to them, and disclose the most inward Recesses of your Hearts, and acquaint them with your Condition, and let them understand how far the great Work of Repentance is wrought in you, and what Impediments and Difficulties are yet in your way, and then humbly crave their Prayers

Prayers for you, defire and prize their Help, their Counsel and Advice, their Admonitions and Directions, and with all eagerness pursue and practice them. David confess'd his Sins before the Prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. 12. 13. and thereupon the Prophet declared and pronounced his Absolution, namely, that the Lord had put away his Sin. St. John the Baptist's Converts came and were Baptiz'd, confessing their Sins, Mat. 3.6. The converted Ephefians came and confess'd, and shew'd their deeds, Acts 19. 18. And hence it was that those adult Persons in the Primitive Times, who were admitted to Baptism, and took upon them the Profession of Christianity, after they had abandoned either Judaism or Heathenism, especially the latter, confess'd the Sins of their former Lives before the Pastor of the Church, who was the happy Instrument of their Conversion; yea, before the whole Assembly and Congregation of Christians. But this properly belongs to that Publick Confession, of which I shall speak anon.

Secondly, It will be convenient and useful to confess and acknowledge, to discover and lay open your Condition to your discreet Brethren and Friends, who are private Christians. You may remember that I mention'd before a Confessing of Sin to such, but that was only to the Parties who were particularly injured and offended. But now I speak of another kind of Confession, and 'tis no other than this, a Christian and Brotherly communicating our Thoughts and Actions, and particularly a laying open our Sins and Offences to one another. This is enjoin'd us by St. James, chap. 5. ver. 16. Confess your Faults one to another; and it follows, Pray one for another. A mutual confessing of Sins, and a mutual Praying, are equally commended

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mended to us by this Apostle, And if Christians were now of the right Primitive Spirit, if they fully understood their Spiritual Interest and Advantage, they would not be averse to the practifing of this Injunction; they would be defirous to fearch into one anothers Hearts and Lives; to give one another an impartial account of their Actions and Behaviour, and mutually to fet their Sins before their view, that thereby they may simpathize, and affectionately tender the Condition of one another, and that Comfort and Solace may be the happy refult of this reciprocal Communi-Thus you fee it is evident from Scripture, that our Sins must be confess'd not only to God, but to Men, viz. when we have injur'd and offended our Brethren, and when our Consciences are troubled, and when we stand in need of Comfort. And both thefe are no contemptible Signs and Discoveries of a sincere Godly Repentance. And upon that Confideration I commend them to you at this time.

But as there is a Private Confessing of Sin, so there is a Publick one. And this (as the former) must be made both to God and Man. First, Confession of Sins must be made to God publickly. Prayer is a Duty and Service which ought to be perform'd in the publick Assemblies of God's Servants, as well as in their Families and private Retirements; and Confession of Sin being a part of Prayer, that must be done likewise publickly as well as privately. This is the proper Work of the Minister, or Person whose Function obliges him to be the Mouth of the People unto God, and to make Intercession for them, Thus Ezra's Confession in behalf of all the People is recorded and distinctly set down in Ezra 9.5. to the end

of that Chapter. So the Publick Confession of Sins made by the Levites is fully and largely rehearfed in Neh. 9. 5. to the close of that Chapter. And all good Men in the feveral Ages of the World have duly practic'd this Duty, as a Proof and Testimony of their hearty Remorse and Repentance for their Sins. They have joined with the Minister in the confessing of Sins, and so they themselves are truly said to confess them. They have publickly acknowledged their Offences; they have openly unburdened their Souls before Heaven; they have freely charg'd themselves with their many Transgressions; they being perswaded that hereby they should give some Evidences of their Repentance, and do that which is accept-

able to the offended Majesty of Heaven.

But there is (as I told you) a Publick Confession and Acknowledgment of Sin unto Men, as well as unto God. And this, no less than the former. is to be look'd upon as a Token and Fruit of Repentance. There want not Instances of this. In these two Cases you will find this Confession hath been made: 1. When there hath been an open injuring of Persons in Word or Deed, and that in a notorious manner. 2. When there hath been an open Offence given by fuch fcandalous Sins as Adultery, Fornication, Apostacy, Blasphemy, and the like. First, I say, in case of open and publick Injuries this Confession ought to be made by those who defire to shew themselves true Penitents. I appeal to you, whether this may not be inferr'd from what I have shew'd before, namely, That our Saviour enjoin'd Private Confession to our Brethren in case of Trespass and Wrong done to them. If the private Injuring of a Neighbour requires a private Acknowledgment, then it follows by parity

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rity of Reason, that the publick Injuring of our Brother ought to be satisfied by a publick and open acknowledging of the Crime. This is grounded on the very Law of Reason; and therefore the wise Institutors of our Laws in this Land dictate no less. But the more exalted Laws of Christianity do enjoin it; there being as great (not to say, greater) Reason that a publick Injury should be acknowledg'd, as a private one; and this must be so by the express Command of our Saviour, as

you heard before.

Again, Not only in case of publick Wrongs and Injuries among Brethren, but likewise, in case of all publick, notorious, and scandalous Practices, or fuch as have Influence on the publick, there ought to be a publick and solemn Acknowledgment. Of this you have an Example in Achan, which was according to the Command of Jojoua, or rather of God himself. Achan had, contrary to the direct and positive Command of God, taken of the accurfed thing, and conceal'd it : Whereupon 70thua puts him upon an open Confession of that horrid Fact, Josh. 7. 10. Make Confession, and tell what thou hast done, and hide it not. And Achan complied with this Exhortation, ver. 20. Achan answer'd Joshua and Said, Indeed I have sinn'd against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: And then he proceeds to discover particularly the abominable Theft, and to acquaint the standers by what was the spring and root of it, viz. Covetouinels : When I faw the rich spoils, faith he, I coveted them, and took them. Of this open Confession you have another famous Example in Ezra 10. 11. Now therefore make Confession to the Lord God of your Fathers, and separate your selves from the People of the Land, &c. Then all the Congregation

gregation answered and said with a loud Voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. And so they actually did, they publickly own'd and confess'd their Faults. and promis'd Amendment. If you read the Title of the 51st Pfalm, you will be thence inform'd, that that Pfalm was David's Publick Confession and Retractation of his Sins of Adultery and Murder. We are told in another place, that he faid to the Prophet Nathan, I have finned against the Lord; But he thought not this to be sufficient; he moreover intended that this should be said in the Publick Assemblies, when he composed this Psalm. He penn'd it on purpose to be a Psalm of Confession, and then he dedicated it to the Use of the Church, that this Confession might be divulg'd and spread abroad. When he had endited this Pfalm, he made it publick, that it might at once proclaim his Sin and his Sorrow. He committed it to the Musicians and Choristers, to be rehearsed in the Temple, that thereby his Offences might be recorded, and that his Adultery and Blood-guiltiness, which were open and notorious, might be openly and publickly acknowledged. The publick Confession of publick Sins hath Approbation and Warrant from the Example of this great Personage. And indeed, if Men were heartily forry for their Sins, they would count it no Shame to express their Repentance for them in this manner.

That we may not think this disgraceful, but that we may be invited to submit unto it in case of open and notorious Sins, I might produce also the Example of Solomon, whose Book entituled Ecclesiastes is a very serious Recantation. There he laments not only the Vanity of the World, but his own Vanity and Folly more particularly, and therein shews himself a publick Penitentiary. That

Book

the Church.

This hath been the Custom and Practice of the true Penitentiaries, not only in the Jewish but the Thus we read that among the Christian Church. Corinthians, the incestuous Person (a most scandalous Offender) was put to open Shame, and a publick Acknowledgment of his high Offence requir'd, before he could be receiv'd again into the Church-Communion. Ecclefiastical History acquaints us, that Origen, out of Fear and Cowardice, offer'd Sacrifice to a Heathen Idol, and thereby did as good as openly renounce his Profession of Christianity, and gave occasion to the Pagan Worshippers to blaspheme the Name of Christ: But this Offender having feriously thought of what he had done, and reflecting on the Scandal of the Fact, he openly and in the fight of his Christian Brethren fell down prostrate on the ground, and call'd them to come and tread upon him as unfavoury Salt: He lamented, with great Passion, his scandalous revolting from his Religion, and his complying with the Idolatry of the Pagans; and after he had in a most doleful manner confess'd his high Offences, he ask'd Forgiveness of the whole Congregation.

St. Augustine, when he took an exact and impartial account of the Miscarriages of his Youth, as also some Errors and Mistakes which he had been guilty of in his Writings, writ a little Book which he calls his Retractations, wherein he publickly laments the scandalous Practices of the former part of his Life, and recants his former Errors. Particularly it would be worth your ob-

ferving,

ferving, how that good Father aggravates his Fault which he committed when he was but a School-boy: (A thing which some would look upon only as a Trick of Youth:) But this Holy Penitent doth so inhanse that Fact, as if that which he stole had been the Forbidden Fruit in the highest and properest sense. This also may be reduced to that former Head, where I shew'd you that Sins are to be Canfessed, with all their Aggravations.

I could set other Instances before you. Theodore Beza was the Author of some lewd Verses when he was Young; he did (he faith) Destryuations publickly difgrace himfelf thereby; and now he Confesseth this, and takes Shame to himself, as you may read in his Commentary on that Greek word, in the First Chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. What fay you to those notable Examples of Publick Contrition and Retractation in our own Church, Archbishop Cranmer, and Bishop Jewel? The former of whom publickly testified his Sorrow for his subscribing to the Popish Articles; and when he came to the Flames, he burnt that Hand first which had been the Instrument of that Subscription: And the latter, with Tears and Sighs, acknowledged his lapfing into the like kind; and when he was an Exile in Germany, he laid open his Fault by a publick Confession in the Congregation where they were affembled.

Thus for great and open Sins, committed in the face of the Sun, an open and publick Sorrow is required; and that for very good Reasons, namely, That God may be glorified by the publick acknowledging of Sin, and by Sinners condemning themselves for it: Also, That others may be warned and terrified by this means: And lastly,

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That the Scandal of notorious Sins may be removed. Need I tell you that publick Confession of scandalous Sins hath been ever accounted a part of Church Discipline? Any one that is acquainted with the History of the Primitive Church, knows full well that publick Repentance was generally practifed in those Days. There were several Degrees and Stations of Penitents, as the Writings of those Times particularly describe them. I only mention this, (which is to our present purpose) that Penitents stood in the Porch, or outward entrance of their Churches, and there wept and mourn'd, and acknowledg'd their particular Offences, and bitterly bewail'd their Follies, and earnestly desir'd the Faithful to interceed for them.

And all the Reformed Churches have used this Discipline, and have held it necessary for supporting the Church of Christ, that such whose Sins are become known and publick, and have brought a Scandal and Reproach on Religion, should publickly confess them before the Congregation. It is their Judgment and Perswasion, that one Effect of true Repentance, is a free and open Retracting of the Errors and Follies, of the Sins and Enormities Men have been guilty of. But most Men (as

\* Pudoris magis memores quam falutis.

Tertullian hath observed) \* are more mindful of their Name and Credit. than of their Salvation: To avoid Shame among Men they venture to

lose the Favour of God: They will keep their Repute by Silence, rather than purchase Peace to their Consciences by Consession. But you have heard that from the beginning it was not so; for in the First Times, and the Ages soon after the Apostles, the poor Penitents prostrated themselves. full low, and begg'd the Prayers of the Congre-

gation, and humbly defired to be taken again into

Communion with the Faithful.

That it is not so now in our days, it is likely this is one reason, because Men are generally disfatisfied with the Customs of former Times, which carry strictness with them. But the main and principal Reason, I am afraid, is this, the great Increase of Sin in these days, and the Boldness which Sinners have arrived to, will not fuffer them to speak well of, and to submit to this Discipline of open confessing their Folly in the face of the Assembly. This is the true Reason of it. Those that resolve to fin would not have Sin disgraced. Indeed they publish their Sin, but in another kind than I'm now speaking of; they do it as those in Ifa. 3. 9. who declared their Sin as Sodom, they hid it not. Instead of recanting their Follies, and openly bewailing them, they do as openly maintain them, and use all arts to commend them to the World: So far are these Men remov'd from the practice of true Penitents.

Thus I have set before you the nature of Penitential Confession, and every part of it I have proved from Scripture, and then I know there can be no Exception against it. The unerring Rule of God's Word authorizes both Private and Publick Confession; it bids us acknowledge our Offences and Trespasses to our Brethren, but it enjoins us to make Confession to God primarily and chiefly, as the searcher of Hearts, and the giver of Pardon and Absolution.

Let me then (before I quit this Head of my Discourse) exhort you to the Conscientious performance of this Duty. Set some Time apart for this great and necessary Work; but more especially confess to the Almighty all the Sins and Fail-

ings which you know your felves to be guilty of Forget not any of them, of what kind foever they be. Remember to confess those Failings to which you are most of all inclin'd, those Sins which do so easily beset you, those evil Thoughts, those wicked Inclinations, those graceless Actions which ve are prone to by your Temper and Constitution, by your Breeding and Education, by your Converse and Society, or any other way which you know hath been conducible to Vice. Acknowledge these, and all your other Offences, with a forrowful Heart, and a relenting Conscience. Remember that 'tis no Shame to confess your Sins, tho' you should have been asham'd to commit them. Suffer then this word of Exhortation, Acknowledge your Transgressions, take Shame unto your felves, and justify God. With all Humility lay open and discover your Hearts before the Searcher of them. You can't conceal your Sins from Him if you would; therefore be perswaded to confess them frankly and ingenuously.

What Arguments shall I use to inforce this upon vou? Remember first, that Confession of Sin is one fignal way of promoting the Honour of God, as we may infer from Johua's words to Achan, My Son give, I pray thee, Glory to the Lord God of Ifrael, and make Confession unto him, Jos. 7. 19. And accordingly he confess'd his Sin, and thereby glorified God's Name, and gave some Evidence thereby of his Repentance. For though his Confession was follow'd with Death and Destruction, yet as to the Defign of giving Glory to God, his Confession was effectual. And my Charity bids me think, that tho' he fuffer'd in this World, yet he found Mercy in another; tho' he underwent the Severity of a Temporal Punishment, yet his Soul escaped

escaped the Eternal one; and that both Soul and Body were sharers in the Divine Mercy. By Sin we dishonour God, and therefore by a penitent Confession we are said to glorify him. And this we do several ways; we give God the Glory of his Truth in laying afide all Diffimulation and Hypocrify, and in speaking the Truth from our Hearts, unto him who is the God of Truth. We give him the Glory of his Holiness, by acknowledging that he is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and by owning the Righteoufness of his Precepts and Laws. We give him the Glory of his Justice, in that hereby we adore his Infinite Severity in punishing Sin. We give him the Glory of his Goodness and Mercy, in that we prostrate our selves at his Throne, and beg his Favour, and feek for the Pardon and Remission of our Sins, and hereby plainly declare that he is an Indulgent Father, and will liften to the Voice of our humble Confession, and be reconciled unto us upon our hearty Repentance. Lastly, We give Glory to the most High God, in that we cause others to glorify him, and to extol and magnify those Attributes of his.

I might in the next place mention the unhappy Consequence of not confessing of Sin. This I will represent to you in that one place of the Pialmist, Psal. 32. 3, 4. When I kept filence (that is, when I did not confess my Sin, as will appear from the words which foon afterwards follow) my Bones wax'd old thro' my roaring all the day long; for thy Hand was heavy upon me day and night. I acknowledg'd my Sin unto thee, and mine In quity have I not bid: I faid I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord. From which words I observe first, That God's own Children are sometimes loth to come

to the Confession of their Sins; they hide that which they should lay open before God; they keep filence when they should be very loud. Secondly, I observe that it is very dangerous thus to keep Silence. When David dissembled his Wound, it fester'd inwardly, and put him to unspeakable Pain and Torment. His finful Silence made him roar : I kept filence, faith he, and yet I roar'd all the day long. A strange Silence indeed which was attended with Roaring! But so it was; for his keeping of Silence fignifies no other than the covering and concealing of his Sin, and therefore is opposed to his acknowledging it, ver. 5. Whilft he would not be induced to confess his Sin, his Conscience was burden'd, his Mind disturb'd, and he cried out and complained in the bitterness of his Spirit. The Wound, the Boil, the inveterate Sore, was not free from Pain till it was launced, and the corrupt Matter let out. Which leads me to another Remark on the forecited words, namely, That a humble and hearty acknowledgment of our Sins, is an Ease to the troubled Soul and the distressed Body. This was the Method this good King made use of here; he acknowledg'd his Sins, and then Peace and Comfort were restor'd to him, with a fense of the Pardon of his Sins. Hence we learn what to do in the like Case: When our Consciences are troubled and tormented with dismal Reflections on our Guilt, we must unbosom our felves, making a free acknowledgment of our Sins without any referve. If we use this Expedient, we shall soon be comforted. They therefore are Enemies to their own Souls, and promote their own Disquiet and Disturbance who refuse to disclose and discover their Sins. Sin is infenfibly increased and strengthened by this means, yea, \* we double our Sins by not confessing them, and hereby our quitatis dua sunt Guilt and our Trouble are in- Iniquitates. Jud. creas'd, and will grow at last un- Prov. fufferable. 

To be plain, No Confession, No Pardon; for you will find that the former is a necessary Condition of the latter; Lev. 26. 40, &c. If they hall confess their Iniquity, and the Iniquity of their Fathers, with their Trespass that they trespassed against me, and also that they have walked contrary unto me, then will I remember my Covenant, &c. That is, he will shew favour to them, and be reconciled, and will pardon their Sins. This is yet more evident from Prov. 28. 13. He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth, and then forsaketh them shall have mercy. Recollect with your selves who are recorded to be hiders of their Sins : fuch were Adam, Cair, Gehazi, Ananias and Saphira. These denied their Sins after the commission of them; but how did they prosper? It is dreadful to remember their Punishment. The first of them ruined himself and all his Posterity, and it had been an utter and final Ruin, if the Messias had not interposed. The second of them turn'd Vagabond, and was a poor affrighted Wretch whereever he went. The third was smitten immediately with a Leprofy: And the two last were struck dead upon the place. That which Men defign in the hiding and concealing of their Sins is the avoiding of Shame and Punishment; but their Defign is frustrated as to both these. For faith our Saviour, There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known, Luke 12. 2. And the Pfalmist had before told us, that God fets our secret Sins in the light of his countenance, Psal, 90.8. K 3

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He sees and observes them, and will one day bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, as the Apostle speaks, I Cor. 4. 5. And then shall the Sinner's Shame and Punishment be so much the greater by how much he endeavoured to cover his Sins, and to keep them from the Eye of Men: Then shall his Hypocrisy be unmask'd, and all Vizards and Veils shall be taken off, and Men shall be ashamed and consounded in the Presence of Saints and Angels, and at the great Appearance of the whole World.

I will conclude this particular with these words of St. John, Epist. 1. Chap. 1. Ver. 9. If we confels our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. His Truth and Faithfulness are ingaged, that if we uncover our Sins, he will hide them, he will mercifully blot them out. This is the Bleffing entail'd on Confession. You can't expect the Pardon of your Sins, you can't have the Guilt of them remov'd, unless you practice this Duty which I have been commending to you. Be not so unwise then as to hide your Iniquities, when the free acknowledging of them will prove so advantageous to you; when Remission of Sin and Divine Acceptance are the happy Effect of it; and when also the confessing of your Sins is a signal Proof and Token of Godly Sorrow and Repentance. And thus I have offer'd to you all that I have to fay concerning this Point.

ance, which is this, a Praising of God, a magnifying his Goodness, and extolling all his other Attributes. Not only Supplication and Confession (which are two parts of Prayer) are the genuine

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Issues of Repentance (as you have heard in the two last Particulars) but Praise or Thanksgiving (which is another effential part of Prayer) is to be reckon'd likewise as an effect of Godly Repentance. Can any Soul feel in itself the Influence of the Spirit working Conversion and Repentance, and yet not break forth into Hallelajahs? Can fo great a Benefit be bestow'd upon him, and yet he fit filent, and proclaim not the Goodness of the Almighty? The contrary is evident from Pfalm 51. 15. My Mouth (ball thew forth thy Praise. After Confession of Sin, and a humble and submissive bewailing of it, and begging of Pardon and Forgiveness, the Penitent is enabled by Divine Grace to praise God for his Goodness and Mercy to him. The Behaviour of those Converts who were prick'd in their Hearts is remarkable; their Gladness and Praising of God are recorded in Alls 2. 46, 47. as the genuine Effect of their Conversion and Repentance. So it is, Godly Sorrow is attended with Joy and Gladness, and is the true spring of them, yea, though the Sorrow be very great, and shews itself in very visible and apparent Signs: Which reminds me of the next Head.

8ly, There must be all outward and Bodily Expressions of Sorrow for Sin, all external and visible Indications of Grief and Mourning. You may remember, that in the Old Testament such as these are mention'd, Baldness and girding with Sackcloth, rending the Garments, fitting in Ashes, sprinkling Dust upon the Head, and the like. These were Rites and Ceremonies of Mourning either proper to the Jews, or common to them with other Foreign Countries, and so are not fitted for our Climate, agree not with our Usages and Customs, and therefore it would be uncouth and

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absurd to impose them upon us. Cutting or Tearing of the Hair was an artificial Token of Sorrow taken up by the Eastern People especially, to represent their inward Mourning. The Yews, tho' they were not allow'd to make themselves Bald for the Dead, yet in time of publick Calamities and Dangers, or to testify their Humiliation for their Sins, might use this solemn signification of it, with that other of Sackcloth also, which was usual among the Pagans, as the Story of the Ninevites sufficiently witnesseth. And we read that other outward Tokens and Signs of Mourning have been made use of. Thus Tertullian saith of the Romans, not vet Christianized, that when the

\* Nudipedalia decer-mintur, fascis retro withheld in time of unseasonavertuntur, &c. able Drought \*, it was the Cufrom to go Bare-foot; band the

Magistrates (to give good Example) laid aside their Purple and Robes of State, and the Enfigns of Authority were reversed. And even in the Christian Church, at times of publick and general Humiliation, some such solemn expressions of Sorrow have been used. o and about the state of the

But here, before I proceed any further, I will lay down this Caution: Beware that you place not Repentance wholly in outward Postures and Corporeal Badges of Grief. This is the fault of a great part of the World. There is a fort of Devotionists who glory in the Austerities of the Body, and think they merit by their fevere Penances. When they have undergone thefe, they think they have done enough; whereas it is the inward and Heart-Sorrow which is intended to be promoted by all those outward badges of Grief. The chief and primary thing is a sincere Regret binitia

of Soul for the finfulness of our Lives, which the outward Humiliation is but to ftir up, and also to fignify and represent. This the Prophet Joel calls, The rending of the Heart : The chief fense of Sorrow must lye there, because that is the seat of Sin. It is not Bodily Austerity and Mortification; it is not hanging down the Head like a Bulrush, or walking with a fad Countenance and dejected Looks; it is none of these that can of themselves pass for Godly Repentance. This doth not confift in wearing of Sackcloth and Hair-shirts next the Skin, in running away from the World, and shutting a Man's self up in Darkness, and loathing all Society and Converse, in taking up a Monaflick Life, and wearing a Cowl, much less in wearing Thorns and Briars next one's Skin, yea, in loading one's felf with Bolts and heavy Bars of Iron, in Lashing and Scourging one's Body, in going Bare-foot, in lying whole Nights on the cold hard Ground, in tedious Watchings and Fastings, even to the exhausting of the Spirits, and impeding the uleful Operations of Life. Some of those who use this Discipline, or rather Cruelty, on their outward Man, do but fit themselves for the future Torments. These austere Usages on the Flesh, do rarely dispossess a Vice; they generally prove as ineffectual to this as the attempts of their Exorcifts, who think to eject the Devil by using strange and unintelligible Words, and as strange Gestures, with the application of Holy Water, as they call it. Alas! these and the former are fruitless enterprizes: seldom is any Sin beaten out of them with all the Blows and Bruises they give themselves. Sin is not walk'd away with a long and tedious Pilgrimage. Vice is not subdued and crush'd by the heavy Burdens they impose upon their

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their Bodies. In short, Outward Acts of Mortification are no Signs and Essects of true Repentance, if they be performed with that vain design and false perswasion which the Papists have, namely, that these things carry along with them Merit, yea, Supererogation, (which is the highest pitch of Merit) that they make Satisfaction for their Sins, and that these Bodily Hardships atone

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and expiate for all their Guilt.

Having laid down this Caution, I proceed, and I affert this, That some outward acts and badges of Grief, some Bodily expressions of Sorrow may fometimes prove good Means and Helps to stir up in us an inward and hearty Repentance, and they may be serviceable to manifest and discover it unto others. Now, there are two outward and Bodily Testimonies of Godly Sorrow, which I shall commend to you, and those are Weeping and Fasting; which are no less useful to us who live under the Gospel, than to them that were under other Dispensations. In all Times and Ages such external Signs of true and fincere Sorrow are needful, to tellify and declare our inward Compunction and Contrition, and to give evidence of our Spiritual Remorfe, to discover the Truth of our Repentance, to strengthen and hearten others, and to invite them to exert the like Godly Repentance. I mention only these two at present, Weeping and Fasting. And in reference to these I pray consult 1 Sam. 7. 6. They gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and pour'd it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said, We have sinned against the Lord. Interpreters vary about this Text, and do not agree what this pouring out of Water was: Some think that it refers to the Sacrifices, and this drawing and pouring out of Water, was for

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for the washing and cleansing of the Flesh, which was to be offer'd to God. Others imagine, that those words are an Hyperbolical Description of their Weeping and Lamenting, as if they feem'd to draw Water, and pour it out when they wept, their Tears and Lamentations being so abundant and excessive. There are others who understand it of their inward Weeping, (if it may be fo call'd) of the Sorrow of their Souls. And fuch Reprefentations as these were not unusual among the Tews; and accordingly Pilate (to comply with their Uiages) call'd for Water, and washed his Hands before all the People, to teltify to them his inward Purity and Innocence. But if I may have leave to offer my Conjecture, it is this, That this drawing of Water, and pouring it forth, were appointed at that folemn time of Humiliation, as a fignificative Symbol or Emblem of that Sorrow and Repentance which they were then to teftify by Bodily Weeping, and shedding of Tears. Looking upon the Water so poured out before them, they were to be invited to imitate it with their wet Eyes, with those penitential streams which are the testimonies of an inward Repentance, with those Rivers of Water, (as the Pfalmist stiles them) which were to run down their Eyes. These Tears were to be join'd unto their Fasting, as you read in that place; and by both these their Sorrow and Repentance would be fitly express'd and evidenc'd.

I begin with the first of these, namely, shedding Penitential Tears. And how frequently do we meet with these Testimonies of Repentance in the Holy Scriptures? You can scarcely find holy David (whom I have more than once propounded to you as a Pattern of Godly Sorrow and Repentance)

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ance) without wet Eyes, Pfal. 6. 6. All the night make I my Bed to swim; I water my couch with my Tears. It is likely he fignifies by this his Weeping both Day and Night. He adds, ver. 7. Mine Eye is consumed because of my Grief. My Sight waxes dim because of my constant Weeping. This Penitent tells us, that his Tears have been his meat day and night, Pfal, 42. 3. In the foregoing Verse he had faid, My Soul thirsteth for God; and now he feems as it were to tell us how he quenches that, namely, with draughts of devout Tears: He drinks them down freely, as if they were pleafant and delightful; and because that which is so, is call'd in Scripture Food, therefore he calls his Tears his Meat, as they are stiled the Bread of Tears in another place by the Pfalmist. Thus David was a great Weeper, and thereby (as by many other Testimonies) approved himself a Godly Peni-

You read in the New Testament of Mary Magdalen, who was so call'd because she had been formerly Married to a Nobleman in the Town and Castle of Magdal, and having great Wealth and Liberty fhe indulg'd herself in Lewdness and Folly, and made her Riches and Estate administer to her Sins; this notorious Sinner, being reclaim'd and converted in her Widowhood, became an eminent Weeper; the holy Affection within her Breast sent forth those Waters. She became as noted for her Weeping as heretofore for her Sinning. Her Tears were so plentiful, that it is said, the wash'd Christ's Feet with them. We read that Peter, after the shameful Denial of his Master, went out and wept bitterly. And St. Paul testifies of himself, that he served the Lord with many Tears, Acts 20. 19. We are acquainted from the Writings of

of Cyprian, Jerom and Austin, and from others who speak of them, that those good Fathers were famous for their devout and penitential Tears. So true is that of a Greek Poet, (quoted as out of Homer by many Writers, but it is not to be found there) - 'Anatol d'aeudanques ardess; that is, Good Men are great Weepers. And therefore we may not unjustly reckon Weeping as one Effect and Fruit of Repentance. I have read in Bodinus, that Witches are never known to shed Tears: He tells us that it hath been often tried and experimented, that Tears could not be fetch'd from them. I know not how true this is; but this is certain, that Satan hath (if I may fo speak) bewitched and hardened most persons in that strange manner. that they never are feen to relent; there are no Tears of Repentance to be extorted from them; they know not what Penitential Weeping means. This Fascination is too frequent every where, and it is too plain an evidence, that Godly Repentance is very rare among Men.

But you will fay, must there needs be Tears to testify our Repentance? Are Tears necessarily required to a Godly Sorrow? Can't there be Remorse for Sin without Weeping? In Answer to this I suggest unto you very briefly these five Propositions, which will soon assoil the Doubt.

1. Repentance is not always accompanied with Tears: every Man is not bound to weep for his Sins. And the Reason is good, because all Men can't weep; the natural Constitution and Complexion, the very Temper and Disposition of some Bodies is such, that they cannot afford Tears. Now from these Persons, be sure God doth not expect the Tribute of Tears; for God is no hard Master, and doth not require of us this external Token

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Token of Sorrow, unless Nature hath dealt it to us. I have read of a King that demanded a Tribute of Sweat from all his Subjects; but this Sweat of the Brain (as Plutarch calls Tears) can't reasonably be requir'd of every one, because no Man is bound to Impossibilities. Here then that determination of a pious and judicious Person

\* Ad exteriores Oculi Lachrymas nemo obligatur. Gerson.

holds true \*, There is no abfolute Obligation on any one to fhed Tears. For fometimes the Frame and Conflitution of

the Body will not permit it. Thus 'tis no absolute Sign of Repentance. That is my first Proposition.

2. There are very many Men and Women who shed Tears, but do not thereby give any Sign of true Repentance. For Pride, and fense of Difgrace, or Hypocrify and Dissimulation, fetch Tears from many Eyes. Esau shed Tears; but the Holy Scripture tells us, that they were far from being Testimonies of sincere Repentance: Lachryma volvuntur inanes. There are many fuch ineffectual Tears shed every day. Sometimes the natural Temper of the Body doth further and promote Tears, as in the weaker and fofter Sex generally. There are some Persons that have as it were Sluices in their Eyes, and they can draw them up, or let them down when they please. They have taught and train'd up their Eyes to Tears. They weep either from Art or Custom. It is certain that some Tears sayour more of Martha than Mary, of Worldly Policy than of Religion and Devotion; mere Crocodiles Tears, which make way for their Teeth. There are Hypocritical Tears, there is a counterfeit Mourning, which is but a well-disturbed Laughter; there is

an elaborate equipage of Sadness, which is form'd and contriv'd on purpose for some ill design. The Stones that you see sometimes overspread with drops of Water, are the hardest of all. It is not impossible that the most obdurate may weep. Harden'd Persons may counterfeit a Lamentation. We conclude then, that Tears are not always a Sign

of real Mourning and Repentance. Yea,

3ly, Want of Tears may and doth fometimes proceed from abundance of Grief and excess of Sorrow. The Soul cannot ease and empty it self, it being so crowded with Grief, so overwhelmed with inward Anguish. Oftentimes the excess of Grief hinders the venting of it. I have read of one that wept bitterly at the Death of his Neighbour, but could not do fo at the Departure of his only Son; for then he was as it were stifled and choak'd with Sorrow. Tears then are no certain Signs of deep Sorrow; as Laughter is no Indication of a folid and profound Joy. A Man will fooner laugh at the hearing of a Jest, than at the tidings brought him of a fair Estate befallen him. Extream Grief is many times pent up in Silence, but a petty Disappointment, or crossing the Will and Desire in some small thing, will make weak and effeminate Persons break out into a loud Pasfion, and mix showers of Tears with their Lamentations. But Sorrow that makes the greatest noise and shew, is not always the greatest and most violent. Mourning implies a deeper and more fettled Grief than Wesping. That, when it is very great, is stupefactive rather than querulous; it confounds rather than busies it self in Complaints. This likewise may be added, that there are other ways of emptying our Grief besides that of Tears. When the Exhalations of grieved Minds turn not into

into Clouds, and so fall down in Tears, they oftentimes are converted into Winds and Tempelts; they breath out in doleful Sighs, which is the more painful and grievous of the two. He then that can Sigh and Groan for his Sins need not be troubled, though he can't express his Sorrow for them by Weeping. He may be a true Mourner and Pe-

nitent notwithstanding his dry Eyes.

4. Though Sorrow for Sin be our Duty, and we are not to be excused from it, yet this is certain, that true Sorrow for Sin confifts rather in a Displeasure against it in the Will and Affections, than in any outward and visible shew in the senfual and inferiour Faculties. If your inward Remorfe and Repentance prove but effectual to the extirpating of Sin, you need not be follicitous about Tears. An inward abhorring of Sin, and firm Resolves to forsake it, are the Tears of the Soul, as a Devout Man calls them; and they are of more value with God than all Bodily Tears. Mark the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chap. 13. ver. 17. My Soul shall weep in secret for your Pride, and mine Eye shall weep fore, and run down with Tears, because the Lord's Flock is carried away captive. His Bodily Eye weeps for their Captivity and Punishment, but his Soul weeps for their Sins. Which of these, think you, is the greatest? The latter most certainly: The Weeping and Afflicting of the Soul far furpasses all outward and Bodily Weeping.

sly, and Lastly, In Answer to the fore-mentioned Demand I say this, That if we can, and frequently do, weep for the outward Losses and Worldly Calamities which befall us, then it is also requisite and reasonable that we should shed Tears for our Sins, and evidence our Repentance by this

external

external mark of it. If the kind Husband can't let his beloved Mate descend into the Grave without watering her Hearfe with his Tears; if the moyling Husbandman bewails (after his Labours) a great Drought, and (as the attendant of that) a great Scarcity and Famine, with a plentiful shower of Tears; if the Merchant that hath loft a Ship is ready to drown it again in those falt waters, his Tears: If thus Men being deprived of their fecular Pleasures and Profits, are able to shed Tears in abundance, but yet cannot fetch one fingle drop for their Sins, they may justly fufpect themselves, and fear that this is not from their Constitution of Body, but from the Indispofition of their Minds, even from the Hardness of their Hearts.

This then is a brief Resolution of the Doubt, namely, Whether Tears are necessary to Repentance, and are always the attendant of Godly Sorrow: Of those that cannot weep God doth not require Tears; but of those that have Tears at command for outward and worldly Evils, God expecteth that they should also weep for their Sins, which are the worst kind of Evils. Now most of you are apprehensive, I suppose, that you can shed Tears on the former account; therefore you can't but infer that you are obliged to do so on the latter, and thereby to shew that you are hearty Penitents. I have read that it is the perswafion of the common People in India, that none can be perfectly healthful who do not wash themselves once at least in the River Ganges. This is undeniable, that that Soul is not perfectly in Health, is not entirely recover'd from its Sins, which hath not wash'd and bath'd it felf in these devout and penitential Streams which I have been

commending to you. That Sinner is not fully recover'd from his Guilt and Pollutions, who hath not beg'd Pardon of God with Tears in his Eyes, supposing he is capable of weeping on other occasions. It is related in the Life of Ignatius Loyola, the Founder of the Jesuits College, that he was fo given to fledding of Tears, that he was forced to beg of God to restrain his excessive Weeping, to check and curb those impetuous Floods, and to fay to them, Hitherto come, and no farther. Thus they represent their Founder to be a wonderful weeping Man. (It is a Wonder indeed he should be so ready to shed Tears, when his Scholars are fo forward and zealous of shedding Blood.) But thus they represent him to have been disposed, because they had a mind to set him up as an extraordinary and miraculous Person. Let us in the mean time be humbly fensible of our Defect, and beg of God to bestow on us that which we so. much want, namely, a foft Heart; that he would be pleased to smite these Rocks, that Waters may gush out. Pray we to God to roll away the stone from the mouth of these Wells, that we may draw Water freely. Let us with the Prophet most pasfionately cry out, O that our Heads were Waters, and that our Eyes were fountains of Tears ! O that we could weep bitterly for the Sins and Enormities we are guilty of ! O that we may never behold them but with Tears in our Eyes!

And O that I this day could be instrumental to fetch but one fingle Drop from the Eye of some hearty Penitent. If any one of you could flied a Tear, it might be some evidence to him that the Word which he hath heard this day hath foften'd him, and had some considerable influence and power upon him. I have for my part, I confess,

always

always reckon'd those Persons of a happy Temper, and (if they would improve it) hugely calculated for Vertue and Goodness, who are so soft and melting that Tears slow from them with ease. Pardon me if I say I do almost envy those who I see are of this soft and yielding nature, and can melt into Tears for their own and others Sins. The weeping Saints have been the most eminent

Saints. \* The more Holy any Man is, the more liberal is he of his Tears, when he confel-

\* Quò quifq; sandior eò ejus in orando fletus uberior.

feth his Sins, and prays for Pardon of them, faith that Pious Father St. Augustine, who was a great Weeper himself. I have set before you the Examples of Devout Weepers, as David and Jeremiah, Mary Magdalen, and the two chiefest Apostles; and others both in Sacred and Ecclesiastical History might be mention'd. These are worthy Patterns for you to follow; and you have the advantage of doing so, because Weeping (as Philosophers have observed) is such an action as excites imitation: We are naturally inclin'd to weep with those that weep.

I might invite you to the practice of this by fuch Confiderations as these; Penitential Tears have been call'd by Devout Men the Wine of Angels, the Refreshment and Solace of those Heavenly Spirits. If there were any shadow of Truth in that Fiction of the Poets about the Nectar of their Gods, one might apply it to this precious Liquor, the Tears of Godly Penitents, which are the great delight and repast of those gloristed Spirits, who rejoyce at the Conversion and Repentance of Sinners. Yea, this Wine is so delightful to God himself, that he bottles it up. Were not this an expression of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, you might

think it somewhat strange and unbecoming. But you know the words of the inspired Psalmist, Put thou my Tears in thy bottle, Pfal. 56. 8. Seeing they are precious in thy fight, do thou preserve them, i. e. let them always be remember'd by thee, and accepted of thee. It follows in that fore-named Verse, Are they not in thy Book? As much as to say, the Saints Tears are register'd and recorded. And this we see fulfill'd; for (as you have heard) the penitential Tears of King Hezekiah are particularly recorded 2 Kings 20. 30. Hezekiah wept fore. We read in the 20th Verse of that Chapter, that Hezekiah made a Pool and Conduit, and brought Water into the City. A Royal Undertaking this, and it was of great Use and Benefit. But his Tears, those Penitential Waters, are recorded as well as those which he brought into the City by a Conduit. His Weeping stands for as great a Monument of his Piety, as his Pool and Conduit were of his Munificence. And we read how the Tears of other Saints are recorded in the Holy Book of God: So that we may truly fay with the Pfalmist, Are they not in thy Book? Let not the devout Soul then be ashamed to shed Tears in abundance. This Water shall not be spilt upon the Ground. The Holy Spirit assures you, that there is a Bottle to preserve it; there is a Book to record it.

Weep then, and know that you have great Encouragement to do so; for God will regard your Tears, even when the vain World laughs at them. Be careful then to make a Present of your Tears to him, and doubt not but they will be accepted with a most favourable and gracious Eye. It is one of the Laws and Ordinances of God in Exod. 22.-29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe Fruits, and of thy Liquors. In the Original it

is. Thou shalt offer the fulness of thy Tears unto God. Let us take this Law in this sense at prefent : let us offer the Almighty the first and best of our Tears. If we can weep for Worldly Losses and Disappointments, yea, oftentimes for a Toy or a Trifle, let us think our felves engaged to thew our Sorrow for our Sins by weeping. They tell us that the great Alexander wept when he heard the Philosophers discourse of more Worlds, when as yet he had not conquer'd one. How great cause have we to weep when we confider how the whole World lieth in wickedness, and we have scarcely the Victory over one Sin yet. If the Tongue, according to St. James, Chap. 3. ver. 6. be a World of Iniquity, how many Worlds are there which we have not yet subdued? The Ear and the Eve. as well as the Tongue, may deserve this Epithet; they are Worlds of Iniquity. There is the World of Pride, the World of Covetousness, (rightly call'd Worldlymindedness), the World of Hypocrify, the World of Prophaneness, and many more such Worlds of Iniquity. O that we could drown thefe Worlds (as it was the Fate of the old one) with a Flood of penitential Tears, which are elegantly stiled by

Nazianzen \*, The Deluge to wash away Sin, and the Purgation of the World. Let Rivers of Waters run down your Eyes, because neither

\* à magnias vara-KAUGUG. KEGUK ng Jacorov.

you nor others have kept God's Laws.

To encourage you yet further in this pious Work, I desire you to remember our Saviour's words in Luke 6. 21. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. Weep for your Sins in this Life, and you shall assuredly rejoice in the Life to come. This present World is a Valley of Tears, a Bochim, a place of Weeping, and therefore Tears and Mourn-

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Mourning are most proper for this State. Afterwards in Glory there shall be nothing of this nature; all Tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes. Weep therefore now, or never. Weep here, to prevent the weeping in Hell; the Weeping of the Reprobate and Damned, being emphatically called by our Saviour Weeping and Wailing. It is commonly faid by Philosophers, that Laughing is the Property of a Rational Creature; but I affert this, that Weeping is the Property of a Penitent Creature, of a New Creature. God is pleased very frequently to lay the foundation of Religion, and Grace, and Conversion, in these Waters; and (to allude still to Holy Scripture) the heads of Dragons are broken in these Waters, the Devil's Power is abated, the most potent Enemies of the Soul are overwhelmed in them.

See then that you constantly cherish the Spring of Tears in you. Let your secret Prayers and Petitions at the Throne of Grace be offer'd up with them. It is recorded of Hannah and Hezekiah, that they mingled devout Teaes with their Prayers; and then it is no wonder that they were heard. The Sound on the Water is most shrill and lowd. Prayers and Tears have a crying and piercing Voice, and are soon heard in Heaven. Whereas the superstitious Papist drops a Bead at every Petition, the true Penitent lets sall a Tear; he wets and bedews the Prayers he puts up; for he knows that

\* Oratio Deum lenit, Lachryma cogit.

of St. Jerom to be true, \* Prayer asswageth, but Tears do in a manner compel the Divine Majesty. God cannot (if I may so speak with Re-

verence) stand against the stream and tide of Tears. If you would then have your Prayers to be effectual and servent, let penitential Tears accompany

Complection hath furnish'd you with moist Eyes, shew your Repentance by them. In a word, since Weeping is a natural expression of Sorrow, since many holy Penitents have manifested their Godly Repentance by it, do you likewise shew yours by the same: let it be seen that devout Tears are a

Testimony and Fruit of true Repentance.

To Weeping I added Fasting: that therefore is the next outward Sign and Testimony of Repentance, and so hath ever been accounted. Religious Fasting, or holy Abstinence, is a distinguishing Effect of Godly Sorrow, and a holy Contrition of Mind. And the particular Instances in Holy Scripture to vouch and confirm this, are almost innumerable. I will mention only two places, whence you may be convinc'd that Fasting is an Indication and Token of Repentance. When the Prophet Joel exhorts the Sinners in Sion to Mourn and Repent, he bids them at the same time fan-Hify a Fast, Chap. 1, ver. 14. And again, Chap. 2, ver. 12. Now faith the Lord, Turn ye unto me with all your Heart, and with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning. This is the proper and fitting Sign of a folemn Humiliation, and turning unto God. See this likewise in the notable Example of the penitent Ninevites, Jon. 3. 5. They pro-claimed a Fast. Yea, this Fast reach'd to the brute Beafts as well as to themselves; they reckoning perhaps those irrational Creatures in the same rank with themselves, who had acted so unreasonably, and lived so brutishly. This however (which is the thing I defign at present) is evident from the Behaviour of the Ninevites, that they really thought Fasting to be a fit attendant and proper token of Repentance. Their very natural Sentiments, or

the Notices which they had gained from some Prophets, or People of God, that came among them, brought them to this Resolve, namely, to proclaim a Fast, and to observe it most solemnly and strictly as a testimony of their humbling them-

felves, and turning unto the Lord.

This kind goeth not forth but by Fasting and Prayer, faith our Saviour concerning the ejection of some unclean Spirits, Mat. 17. 21. It may be applied with truth likewise unto the ejecting and extirpating of Sin out of the Soul. This oftentimes is fo powerful, that it cannot be expell'd without Religious Falting and Abstinence. You must know then, that the true Use of Fasting, (I mean Religious Fasting; for I am not speaking of that Fasting which is the prescription of Physicians, and is designed only for Bodily Health or Recovery) the true Use, I say, of Religious Fasting is this, that it may be a Help to Prayer and Devotion, a Furtherance of Humiliation and Self-denial, a Cattigation of the Flesh, or (as the Apostle expresent it) keeping under the Body, and bringing it imo sabjection, I Cor. 9. 27. And that Fasting is serviceable to this purpose, for the subduing and maltering our vile and inordinate Appetites, (which are usually bred by Wantonness, Idleness, and Fulness of Bread) Reason, Experience, and Holy Writ sufficiently festify But I intend not to expariate on this Head ... All that I purposed was to let you know, that Religious Fasting is a great Quickner, as well as a Sign of true Repentance.

But then you must not missake me. When I commend Fasting to you as an Effect of Repentance, I do not mean any such thing as the Popish way of Fasting, which indeed cannot with any reason and truth

truth be call'd Fasting; because if you speak properly, it is no other than a mere Change of Foods not an Abstinence from Food; as 'tis well known that they change Flesh for Fish, and the choicest of Fish. Wherefore some of their chief understanding Men look upon it as a Cheat, and accordingly whilft they call upon others to Fast after this manner, they in the mean time make no Conscience of cramming themselves with Flesh, and other Dainties: As they fay Pythagoras of old enjoin'd his Scholars abstinence from Beans, but he liked that fort of Food very well himself, and fed' plentifully upon it. Or elfe on the other hand, those of the Roman Church run into Excess, and with long Abstinence weaken and impair their Bodily Strength, and so pinch and macerate their Flesh that they render themselves unfit for many Offices of Human Life. But a Fast, if it be such as it ought to be, and conscientiously and religionly kept, is of great use in Christianity. It hath been frequently made use of in the Church of God on folemn Occasions, and devout Christians have not neglected it in their privacies; for hereby they have laid a Restraint on their Appetites, and have starved their Sins by a holy Abstinence and Mortification; hereby they have humbled their Bodies, and exalted and refin'd their Souls, and have given some evidence to themselves and others of their Repentance and Change of Life.

9ly, I proceed to the next Fruit or Effect of Repentance, and that is Restitution, according to that

antient, but true \* Saying of St. Augustine, Unless a Man restores peccatum, nist restily took from him, that Sin of

\* Non remittitur

Theft and Defrauding cannot be forgiven. So in

any

This Reparation after Defrauding or Defaming is call'd by some making of Satisfaction. Mistake me not here when I speak of Penitential Satisfaaion. I suppose none will think that I favour the Doctrine of the Roman Catholicks, who affert, That after the Pardon of Sin there remains due an Obligation to Punishment, which the penitent Sinner must fatisfy the Divine Justice for here, or in Purgatory. The Satisfaction which is made for Sin in this Life is by Prayers, Almsdeeds, Fasting, outward Austerities enjoin'd by the Priest, Pilgrimages, Scourgings, Oc. and by all Temporal Punishments inflicted on the Body and Estate. This is the Determination of the Council of Trent, in its 6th Seffion, Chap. 14. But we cannot but fee how palpably this derogates from the Satisfaction of Christ, as if he did not, or could not satisfy for the Temporal as well as Eternal Punishment due to Sinners. Our very Reason dictates to us, that Christ's Satisfaction is compleat and entire, full and perfect, and confequently excludes all other Satisfactions. We may rest then on this Truth, that Christ alone hath satisfied for Sins. and his Merits are our Satisfaction. We cannot fatisfy God, and therefore Christ undertook that. and performed it. But though we cannot make Satisfaction to God, yet we may be said to do it

unto Men, that is, to make some Recompence for the Injuries which we have done them. This Satisfaction we may make, yea, and we ought to make it. This is done either by acknowledging our Fault, or by restoring what we have ill gotten; we may satisfy either by Word or Deed. The former I spoke of before, when I treated of owning and confessing our Offences to our Brethren; the latter will fall under my Consideration

at present.

They that have wrong'd and defrauded others by Rapine or Theft, they that have been injurious and hurtful to the Estates of their Neighbours, must make Recompence for the Injury they have done. They must by no means keep and detain what they have unlawfully got. If any here prefent are guilty in this kind, I defire you to weigh feriously what I'm now suggesting to you. Never fay that you have Repented, never call your felves Penitents, as long as you are conscious to your selves that you have not made Restitution of those Goods which were purchased by Fraud and Deceit, and which properly belong to others, not to you. Let me request you to consult to this purpose Lev. 6. 2, &c. If a Soul fin and commit a trespals, and lye unto his Neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep (by way of Pawn or Pledge), or in fellowship, (that is, by way of Dealing and Commerce), or in a thing taken away by violence, (that is, plain Robbery), or bath deceived his Neighbour any other way, or hath found that which is loft, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsly, (that is, he is so far from restoring what is another's, that he by Lying and Swearing maintains that he hath no fuch thing in his possession); in any of all these that a Man doth, finning therein, then shall it be, be-

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raufe he hath finn'd, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, &c. (mentioning there the particular ways of Injuring and Wronging others before fpecified), and he shall even restore it in the Principal, and hall add the Fifth part more thereunto, and give it unto whom it appertaineth. These are the Words of God himself, (as you read Verse 1.) they are a Divine Law from Heaven, and concern not only the Jews, but all Mankind; (for as to the particularity of a Fifth part besides the Principal, that was an arbitrary Constitution or Circumstance, and God might have made it the third or fourth part, if he had thought good) This great and substantial Law of Restoring what was unlawfully got, carries an intrinsick Goodness with it: it is a Dictate of right Reason, and Natural Justice and Equity plead for it. Tho' the Jews were here commanded to observe it, yet it was no part of the Ceremonial or Judicial Law, but is an Appendix to the Moral Law, to the Ten Commandments; particularly it is to be refer'd to the Eighth, Thou shalt not Steal. He that restores not ill gotten Goods is a Thief. You will fee this further confirmed in Ezek. 33. 14, 15. When I say to the Wicked, Thou shalt not surely die, if he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right: (Here is a general Description of Repentance; for God by the Prophet is giving the Character of a Penitent, and of God's exact Justice towards every one that is fo. Next, follow the particular Effeets and Fruits of this Repentance, among which this is one) If the wicked restore the Pledge, and give again that which he hath robbed. You must discover that you are Penitents by restoring and giving M: Engine is they then ball a lay be-

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back again all that you have injuriously taken, or withheld from others.

But this is Old Testament Doctrine, some may fay, and perhaps was calculated for those Times only, and doth not concern us under the Gospel. Wherefore I will propound to you one of our Saviour's own Converts, and in his Example you shall see how requisite this Duty is. In Luke 19. 2. we read of one named Zacheus, who was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich. This Person had a great desire to see Jesus, and Jesus as great a desire to see him, and to be a Guest at his House: Accordingly Christ invited himself, and this Man receiv'd him joyfully, and at the same time profes'd his readiness to part immediately with all that he got unlawfully and unjustly: Zacheus stood up, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor, (as a voluntary Gratuity, to shew my Love to my dear Lord, who hath been fo Gracious and Merciful to me this Day) and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him four-fold; to shew my hearty Repentance for what Wrong I have done in my Office, or otherways. Whereupon Jesus said unto him, ver. 9. This day is Salvation come to this House, for somuch as he is also the Son of Abraham; that is, not only I am come to thy House, who am the Saviour of the World. but with me Salvation and Forgiveness are thy Portion; and now thou truly shewest thy self to be a Child of the Father of the Faithful; thou hast done like a true Convert and Penitent, and thy Repentance is evidently manifested by this signal Act of thine of making Restitution.

But now I am to let you know that this Restitution may be either in kind, or in something

equivalent in kind; that is, when the Person restores the very fame Thing which he had fraudulently taken from his Neighbour: And this must be done if he hath the Thing still in his hands, and can make Restitution of it: Otherwise it must be in fomething equivalent; that is, he must make amends for the Damage by fomething of the like nature; he must compensate the Injury some way or other. And let me tell him, he shall not be a lofer by it. As 'tis in Phlebotomy, fome part indeed of the substance of the Blood is taken away, but then by this means the matter of the Fever is taken away likewife, and fo it conduces to the Recovery and Health of the Patient; even fo in this Case; though the Party who hath injur'd his Neighbour quits what he had unlawfully taken from him, yet hereby he takes a course, so far as in him lies, to abate his Guilt, and remove the matter of it, and to procure Health and Peace to his Conscience, and to gain the Favour and Mercy of the Almighty. In brief, Restitution is then indispensible when the Person is in a capacity to perform it; otherwise God requires it not. When a Man hath nothing left to Restore, his Willingness to do it if he were able, shall be sufficient. Let this then (as well as the other things which I have mention'd) be reckon'd by you as a Fruit of Repentance. Know this, that by detaining what is another's, you perfift in your former Sin; you give the World to understand that you approve of your injuring and wronging your Neighbour, as long as you restore not what you wrong'd him of; besides that you derive a Curse upon your felves, and upon what you enjoy, by your with-holding those things which you unlawfully and unjustly got. Shew then your Repent-

ance by Restoring them.

10ly, Another Effect, or (if you will) a Sign and Testimony of true and unseigned Repentance is this, viz. a great defire and indeavour to work Conversion and Repentance in others. There is in every true Penitent a great Tenderness in respect of his Brethren. Who is offended, saith the Apostle, and I burn not? Who is infirm and weak, and I am not very warmly affected with his Cafe and Condition? Those that have felt a deep Remorfe for their evil ways, have learnt to pity, mourn and lament for others, because they turn not from their Sins unto God, because they do not mourn and lament for themselves. Godly Penitents are very forward to inform and inftruct those that are ignorant, and to conduct them into the ways of Religion. This you will find was the result of David's Repentance, Psal. 51. 13. Then will I teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee. I will be a great Instrument in doing that great and bleffed Work; I will use all endeavours to bring impenitent Sinners to a knowledge of their Duty, and to make them understand themselves, and to return unto God whom they have forfaken. And hear the Language of this Penitent in Pfal. 66. 16. Come and hear all you that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul. I will let them be acquainted with the Mercy that I have been partaker of, and I will excite and exhort them to use the same Method that I did to gain the Favour and Acceptance of the Almighty. Our Saviour's Advice to Peter was, When thou art Converted, Arengthen thy Brethren, Luke 22. 32. When thou experimentally findest the Grace of Repentance wrought in thee,

thee, (as already thou hast in great measure) be not forgetful to call upon others to abandon their Evil ways, and to forfake their former Follies and Vanities, and heartily to betake themselves to a Religious and Godly, Life. This is a certain Maxim, That he who hath a true sense of the Evil he hath done, and is fincerely forry for it, will promote and advance the like Sense and Sorrow in others; he will gain Profelites to Religion, and win many Souls unto God; he will take care to reclaim his Neighbours and Acquaintance from their wicked Courses, and he will save them with fear, plucking them out of the fire, and preventing their running into Everlasting Burnings. St. Paul was an eminent Instance of this, who being reclaim'd by the particular and remarkable Hand of God from his Evil Ways, was zealous for the converting of others, and labour'd more abundantly in that Work than all the Apostles. So it is, Grace is of a communicative nature, and loves to spread it self in a long circumference. We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and beard, said the Apostles, Acts 4. 20. And in some measure the same operative Principle influences on all that have a true Sense of Religion, and is a very diffusive quality. I had Reason then to asfign this as a certain Token of true Repentance and Reformation of Life, that it makes Men follicitous to amend and reform others. And thus you see what are the Effects and Fruits of Godly Repentance, which was the thing I undertook to give you an account of.

But I have not yet finish'd this Task. I will add, after all that I have said, those particular Effects and Evidences of Repentance which are reckon'd up by the Apostle in 2 Cor. 7. 11. For be-

hold,

hold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly fort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of your selves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement defire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge? Some of these are partly comprehended in the Particulars above-named, or may be referr'd unto them; but most of them are matter of a fresh Consideration. Here are seven Things named by the Apostle, which are found in

every true Penitent.

The first is Carefulness. What Carefulness it wrought in you? This denotes first, a Concernedness of Mind, serious and sober Thoughts, deliberate Resolutions. It supposes a casting off Security; it implies a Sollicitude of Mind. The Man who hath been acquainted with the evil nature of Sin, and the danger of it, will grow anxious and careful, and keep his Eyes open, and be on his watch for the future. Secondly, This denotes a great Care of avoiding the Occasions of Sin, of shunning all Temptations to Vice, and keeping at a distance from them, lest we be drawn in, and inveigled unawares. And Thirdly, There is a Care to amend whatever is amis. Whereas before this Man, like anxious Martha, was careful about many things, that is, of this World, now his great study is about the Things of another and better Life. He is follicitous how he shall discharge his Duty with Sincerity and Faithfulness: he is more than ordinarily careful how he shall please God, and save his Soul. This is set down here by the Apostle as the first Fruit of Godly Sorrow and Repentance.

The Second is, Clearing of our selves, that is, of our Consciences from the Guilt of Sin, by seeking for the Pardon and Forgiveness of them. Or,

there may be this rendring of the words, according to the Greek, What Apologizing for your selves? The true Penitent makes a double Apology: 1. Before God, by a free acknowledging of his Sin, with a deprecation of Judgment, befeeching the great Lover of Souls to avert those Plagues and Punishments which are justly due to him by reason of his repeated Sins. 2. He makes an Apology unto Men; that is, he is unwilling to be reputed guilty when he is not. When Crimes are charg'd upon him, which he is no ways confcious to himfelf of, he clears himself of them; he shews that he approved not of such and such Actions, and that he defires to stand right in the Opinion of his Brethren, as well as to be quitted in the Sight of God: Whereas, those who have no true Remorfe for Sin, care not whether they be quitted either by God or Men.

Thirdly, Indignation is the next Effect of Repentance; Indignation against Sin, and against our selves for committing it. If we truly repent, we shall hate Sin as Ammon did Tamar, more than he loved her before, and then offer'd all Indignities to her. We have a very remarkable Instance of this spiritual Indignation in Isa. 30. 22. Te shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of Silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of Gold, (you shall shew your abhorrence of your former Idolatry by even polluting and defiling the Idols which you before worship'd) thou shalt saft them away as a menstruous Cloth, thou shalt say unto it, Get thee bence: Which surther expresses their Indignation

against their former Sins.

Fourthly, What Fear? That is another Consequence of Repentance: And it implies, a. A trembling at the Threatnings of God against Sin-

ners,

ners, a being afraid of his Judgments. A true Penitent, who hath lain under the Spirit of Bondage, and hath felt the Wrath of the Almighty, will for ever afterwards stand in Awe of him, and be sensible of his Frowns and Displeasure. 2. This may denote a Fear of falling into Sin again, and thereby of offending God. He dreads the thoughts of this, and continually watches, and stands upon his guard, and (in a word) works out his Salvation with fear and trembling. This is the Fruit

and Effect of Gospel-Repentance.

The Fifth mention'd by the Apostle here, is Vehement Desire; that is, a hearty wishing that he had never committed Sin, that he had never offended and provok'd God thereby: Or thus; a vehement desire of God's Grace and Assistance to enable him for the future to give a repulse to all the Temptations and Assaults of Satan, and to withstand the Allurements of the World and the Flesh: An earnest and importunate desire to be freed from the Power and Dominion of Sin, to serve God acceptably, and not to deviate from any of his Commands. This vehement Desire breaks out into passionate Wishes, such as that of the Psalmist, O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes!

Sixthly, What Zeal? That is reckon'd likewise as an Essect of Godly Sorrow. Zeal is a compound Assection, made up of Love and Anger, and so it will excite us to love God and Goodness above all things, and to shew our Anger and Displeasure against Sin. This Zeal and Godly Repentance are join'd together in Rev. 3. 19. Be zealous therefore and repent. True Repentance will discover it self by a well-temper'd Zeal. A Godly Penitent will be very warm and vigorous in the

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pursuit and practice of Holiness for the suture. St. Paul, who was so busy and laborious in perfecuting the Church, and haling poor Christians before the Council, when he was converted labour'd more abundantly than all the other Apostles. Peter who thrice denied Christ made a tripple Confession of him, and was an eminent and zealous Advancer of the Gospel. Austin and Luther who had been led away by Error and Vice in their Youth, were afterwards more than ordinarily active in the Cause of Christ and his Gospel. So it is with those that are true Penitents, they manifest their Zeal in undertaking, doing, or suffering any thing for the promoting of God's Glo-

ry in the World.

The Last Effect of Godly Sorrow and Repentance is Revenge. What Revenge? faith the Apostle. The Penitent is so displeased at Sin, and so angry with himself and others for the commission of it, that he is studying a kind of Revenge. Of this I will give you a notable Instance in Exod. 32. 19,20. Moses's anger waxed bot, (his Zeal made way for a pious Revenge) and he took the Calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strow'd it upon the water, and made the Children of Israel drink of it. By this strange Action he teaches the Israelites to be reveng'd as it were upon themselves for their Idolatry. These notorious Offenders, to shew that they are Penitents, must with Shame and Sorrow drink the Dust of their Idol, the Powder of the Golden Calf, that they may vomit up again that Pleasure which they took in the acting of their Sin. The Penitents at Ephefus exercis'd another kind of Revenge; for (as we read in Atts 19. 18, 19.) after they had confess'd and shew'd their deeds, many of them who used

used curious Arts (meaning the Arts of Magick and Enchantment) brought their Books together, and burnt them before all Men. This was a good Testimony of their Conversion and Repentance. They committed those Books to the Flames which, if they had gone on to practife in, would have made them liable to Everlasting Burnings. plain Instance of Godly Revenge was that which I had occasion to mention before, speaking of Publick Confession and Retractation of our Evildoings. Archbishop Cranmer did not only make an open Recantation, but, when he was suffering at the Stake, he burnt that Hand first which subscribed to a former owning of the Popish Articles which were offer'd to him to affent to. To this Revenge, which is a Testimony of true Repentance, may be referr'd Fasting, of which I have spoken already. And also to this belong Mortifia cation and Self-denial, a checking and curbing those Desires which we once gratified, a laying a Restraint upon our selves, and refraining from all appearance of Evil, and that with the greatest Strictness, because we took our Liberty too much before. This is a kind of holy Revenge. thus I have given you a fhort Comment on this Text of St. Paul. He proves here the Corinthians Sorrow and Repentance to be right, and according to God, because they produced these several EffeEts.

All the Application which I will make of this. and the former Particulars, is of the like nature with that before, when I laid down the Esential Parts and Acts of Gospel Repentance. As then I defired you to try and examine your felves by the several Particulars, so now I request you to search and try whether your Repentance be true by these

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Signs and Tokens, by these Fruits and Effects which I have treated of. If your Repentance be true and genuine, it will discover it self by these Evidences which I have offer'd to your Consideration. It will certainly display it self by these plain Effects and Tokens. Methinks I hear most Men say (for the generality of Mankind are apt to flatter and deceive themselves) we have repented, we have been forry for our Sins, we have turn'd unto God. But let me reply as St. James in the Case of Faith, What will it profit, my Brethren, if a Man faith he hath Faith? if he only says so, and prefumes that he is Master of that Grace: So what are you the better, my Brethren, for faying you have Repentance? But let me ask you seriously, Where are the Fruits and Effects of it? How do you evidence to your felves and others that you have truly repented of your Sins? I befeech you correct your false Conceptions concerning Repentance; rectify your mistaken Apprehensions about the nature of this Grace, not only in respect of the Essential Acts of it, (of which before) but also in respect of the Fruits and Effects of it.

Be serious then, and ask your selves whether you do call your former Sins to remembrance, and whether you be willing and contented to be put in mind of them by others. Do you seel in your selves a Child-like shame and blushing at the remembrance of them? Do you sirmly resolve against Sin for the future? Do you humbly submit to God's Hand, and accept of the Punishment of your Sins without murmuring and repining? Are you stirred up to be servent in Prayer, and to confess your Sins, with all their Aggravations? Do you out of the sense of that singular Mercy which you have receiv'd from God, break forth into

Praises

Praises of his Holy Name? Do you humble your Souls with Fasting and Weeping? Do you make Restitution where the Case requires it? Lastly, Do you find in your felves a great Defire to convert and reclaim others, and are you no Strangers to those Marks of Repentance which the Apostle heaps up together, and which I particularly explain'd to you? Examine your selves by all these. Deceive not your selves in so great and weighty a matter. Say not that you have Repented unless you can evidence it by all or most of these Effects.

And you must remember to join these with the Essential Acts of Repentance. These must go together. I will give you one Instance to shew you how you may be deceiv'd, unless you take the Acts and Effects in Conjunction. You read in Matth. 27. 3. that Judas, that forlorn Miscreant, Repented himself; and there was one considerable Act, and two visible Effects of his Repenting; but yet his Repentance was not true; yea, it was of no value, because all the Essential Acts, and mest of the Effects were wanting. You read first that he was forry: That is the meaning of the word which we render [he repented himself], which fignifies only that he was troubled and grieved for betraying his Master; the Fact displeased him, he wish'd he had not done it. His Eyes were open'd to see his Sin, and to be vexed and troubled at it. Secondly, he confess'd and acknowledg'd his Sin, ver. 4. I have finn'd, in that I have betray'd the innocent Blood; he owns his Guilt, he declares himfelf a vile Traytor and Murderer. Thirdly, he makes a kind of Restitution, ver. 3, He brought again the thirty pieces of Silver to the chief Priests and Elders; he threw back the Money which he had receiv'd,

receiv'd, he dislik'd the Wages of Iniquity, he cares not for Gain and Riches got by fo horrid and bloody a Crime. And yet notwithstanding this Sorrow, this Confession, and this Restitution, his Repentance was (as I have faid before) of no value; it was not a true Repentance: For tho' he saw his Sin, yet he was not forry for it after a Godly manner; nor did the Sorrow proceed from a right Principle, i. e. an inward Hatred of the Fact which he had committed; and other branches of true Repentance, before named, were

wanting.

You fee then that Repentance is a complex Grace, it contains many things in it, which counterfeit Penitents are strangers to. There is Elau's Repentance, there is Pharaoh's Repentance, there is Abab's Repentance, and (as you have heard) there is Judas's Repentance. But none of these will stand you in any stead; none of them are true and faving. All the Ass and all the Effects of Repentance must be join'd together. There must be Hatred as well as Sorrow, and this Hatred must arise from this Consideration, that the Sins which we have committed are contrary to the pure Nature of God, and are Evil in their own Nature. There must be a leaving of Sin, and this leaving must be without any reserve. There must be an actual observing and practising the Commands of God. There must be a continual striving and watching against Sin, through the whole course of our Lives. Repentance must be constant, habitual, and perpetual. Observe therefore the true Language of the Penitent in Hof. 14. 8. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with Idols? I renounce them for ever, I bid a lafting farewel to them. On the other hand, the Repentance

pentance of Formalists and Hypocrites is of a fhort duration. They make a shew of forsaking their Sins in the hour of Affliction, in the time of some pressing Calamity; but when these are remov'd, they resume their old Sins, yea, they embrace them with a greater Affection than before. Who can think that the Repentance of such Persons is true? No, no: If they would evidence to themselves and others that they have attained to the true Gospel Repentance, it must be lasting and durable. They must take leave of their Sins as St. Paul did of those in Acts 20. I know that ye shall see my Face no more. Or say, as Moses to the Israelites, The Egyptians whom ye see to day, ye shall fee again no more for ever. These Sins which ye are now resolving to cast off, you must purpose to be never acquainted with again. A true Penitent parts with his Sins as his utter Enemies, and he is desirous to be rid of them for ever.

Thus I request you to try and examine, whether your Repentance be of the right nature and kind: Ask your felves, whether it hath all its neceffary Qualifications, and is accompanied with all those Fruits and Effects which that excellent Grace and Duty is known by. And now I have finish'd the Third General Head of my Discourses on this Subject; that is, I have (according to what I design'd) set before you the true Nature of Evangelical Repentance, by shewing you what are the genuine Effects and Fruits of it. I hope I have by so large a Treating on these things, given you a full Account of this indispensible Duty. Now I proceed to the remaining Heads of my infuing

Discourses on this important Theme.

I must in the next place answer the Objections and Excuses which are wont to be made by those

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who refuse to put this Doctrine in practice, i. e. to repent of their Sins. The main Cavils are, that Repentance is Unpleasant, Unprofitable, and Disgraceful. These are the three great Pleas of Sinners.

1. It is Objected, that Sin and the commission of it are very pleafant and delightful, and that Repentance is an uneasy and melancholick thing. We shall sensibly grow older, say they, even by a Thought of Repenting: What is then Repentance it felf? How dismal and deadly will that prove? If we Repent, we must quit all our Pleasures, we must abandon all Delights, and bid farewel to our good Days; and therefore we defire to be excufed from any fuch unwelcome Undertaking. The very word Pleasure makes great Melody in our Ears: This stirs our Blood, and adds a new Life. to us. But whatever is void of Pleasure is dull and dead, and of no use. After Death there is no fuch thing as Pleasure, the Consideration of which strikes a greater Terror into us, and is more killing than Death it felf. Wherefore we resolve to enjoy our Delights whilft we can have them, we will pass our Days in Mirth and Jollity, and damn all that is not Pleasurable. Our Youthful and Sanguine Temper cannot brook the Doctrine of Mortification and Repentance. We cannot fneak, and be base; our generous Constitution enclines us to be free and debonair; our frolick Genius hates to be tied up with fordid Restraints; our Nature recoils at Confinement; and confequently our Blood starts back affrighted at the very naming of Repentance. Alas, we can find no Pleasure in continual Tears and Sighs, in penitential Groans and Lamentations, in the dark Retirements of the Devout, and in Closets hung with Mourning.

Mourning. But as for the Sweets of this World. we know very well what they are; we have often try'd them, and the relish of them is always on our Palats; therefore come along with us, and follow our Example, all ye Sons of Pleasure. If you have a love for this, you must not think of Repentance, which will debar you of all that is pleasant and delightful. After this manner we may suppose the Impenitent, especially the Youthful Sinner, inveigling his Companions to Vice, and diffwading them from Thoughts of Repentance.

In Answer to this plausible Objection of the voluptuous and fenfual Sinner, I offer these following Things to your Consideration, which when you have duely and distinctly weigh'd, I hope the Force of the Objection (if there were any Force at

all in it) will be removed.

The First Thing which I say is this; When thou art called to Repent, thou art not bid to leave any Pleasures, but those only that are sinful and unlawful. When the Preacher invites and exhorts thee to Repentance, do not imagine that he calls thee away from thy innocent and harmless Delights, and that he abridges thee of enjoying the good things of this World, or that he would have thee turn Anchoret, and bid farewell to all Society, and to devote thy felf to Melancholy and Sadness. No, no; he intends no such thing. I affure you for my part, I defign nothing of this nature : I do not call you off from any of your lawful Pleafures, but from those only which are finful and un-Christianity doth not require you to take your leave of any laudable and commendable Delight; it freely allows you to enjoy the good things of this Life, and to rejoice in them. There is not

not the least prohibition against this in the whole Volume of the Evangelical Writings. You may fafely taste of all the Trees in the Garden of Pleafure, only you must not meddle with the forbidden Fruit. Repentance doth not deny you the Entertainments and Diversions which are for your Health and Refreshment. You may eat your Food, and drink your Wine with a merry Heart. You may make use of the Comforts and Refreshments which Providence and Nature have vouchfafed you; but do it with Thankfulness, and with defigns of glorifying your Maker. You have choice of Delights which are Innocent, and not one of them is forbidden you. Our Saviour forbids no Man to entertain himself with the Objects of this lower World; for he is a part of it himself. There is no prohibition against recreating his Senses, and refreshing his Mind with the good Things which God hath set before him. The Sensitive Life is good and lawful in it felf, it and all its emanations being from God. But the unmeasurable and exceffive exerting of it is unlawful, and no good Man pleads for this. Lawful Pleasure, and that which is Natural and Innocent is the best, and the fafest; and this is indulged to every vertuous Man: But the Excess of Pleasure, and gratifying our Lufts, is a Force and Violence on Nature, and fo indeed it is no true Pleasure. This is unquestionable, that a good Man may serve God, and enjoy the Creature at the same time. Think it not harsh if I say, we may please God and our selves together: I mean no more than this, that Religion and Pleasure are intermix'd. A Christian Man's Life hath innocent Diversions attending it. You may recreate your felves and glorify God at once. Think not then to excuse your selves from RepentRepenting, by faying that then you must be excluded from all Pleasures and Delights. This is an arrant Falshood; for no lawful and harmless

Pleasures are denied you.

2ly, I Answer, That the Pleasure of Sin (which they talk of) is generally a Fancy, a Cheat, a De-That Satisfaction which they fay they find is false, airy and imaginary. Sin, it is true, promises fair, and looks beautiful at the first view: but upon our nearer approaches to it, upon a stricter observing of it, we find it to be ugly and deformed. Satan suggests this to us, that Sin is comely and delightful, that thereby we may be inticed to act it; but afterwards, when we reflect upon what we have done, we fee we were deluded, and that it was Satan's Craft to catch us after that manner. The Angler takes care to cover his Hook with a Bait; for the Fish are not so filly as to nibble at the bare Hook. I never heard that any of those Creatures, who are out of a capacity of drowning themselves, did ever make use of the Angler's Hook to dispatch themselves another way. It is the goodly Bait that proves their ruine; they are tempted by that, and fo fwallow down their Destruction. Thus the Devil and wicked Men, who would fuccessfully tempt others to fin, forget not to provide a fair Bait to cover the Hook; that is, they allure others to fin by pretence of the Pleasure which accompanies it: they cry up the Sweetness and Delight which go along with it, and hereby inveigle many Souls to their utter Ruine and Perdition. This they are forced to do that they may prosper in their attempts: there were no possibility of bringing Men to the commission of some Sins, if this plausible Bait did not hide the Mischief from their Eyes.

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Do you not fee that there are some laborious and toilsome Sins, which Men, by the Devil's Instigation, are wont to entitle Pleasures, or else they would be by no means tolerable? You may observe, that there are some Sins which have not fo much as a shadow or likelyhood of Pleasure; for they fprang first of all out of a rancorous and malicious Mind, boiling with Hatred and Revenge, and they afterwards ended in Blood and Destruction, even of the Persons who nourish'd them. Did you never hear of a Person of a malicious and desparate Spirit, who that he might be reveng'd on his Enemy, resolutely exposed himfelf to a violent and unavoidable Death, that his Adversary might be sure to be involved in the fame Ruine? A strange kind of Pleasure indeed, to undo himself, that he might more effectually undo his Enemy. Is it possible that Pleasure should be entail'd on those Sins which make a Man uncapable of Pleasure, and fling him by the very acting of it into all Danger and Mischief? This shews that the Pleasure of Sin is fantastical and counterfeit, and that the false Sense of Pleasure which Sinners feel, proceeds from the Depravation and Corruption of their Minds, from want of Judgment and Confideration, from a contradictory spirit which loves Sin because it is forbidden, and calls all stolen waters sweet, from the Flatteries and false Representations of the Evil Spirit, from a flight and superficial Taste of Goodness and Holiness, from a perverse and wilful Mind, which, if once fet upon Vice, will create a kind of Pleasure in it. But this Pleasure is painted and artificial, it is false and counterfeit, and being fo it will leave the Man uneafy and diffatisfied. It is elegantly compared by the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah to a Dream or a Night-vision; As when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eats, but he waketh, and his Soul is empty; or as when a thirsty Man dreams and behold he drinks, but he awaketh and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath appetite, Isa.

29. 8.

I Answer 3ly, That the Pleasure of Sin (suppose it be not counterfeit, yet) for the most part is brutish and sensual, and no other than what a Beast is partaker of; yea, there are some Beasts which have a higher Gust of them than Men. Let not understanding Persons then deceive themselves, but consider and weigh well the nature of true Pleasure, and such as is worthy of Rational Beings. It is true, Corporeal and Senfual Pleasures feem to outvy and exceed those of the Mind, because they are more known and familiar to us. We were first acquainted with them; and afterwards, as we grew up, we increas'd our intimacy with them. The Soul and its purer Operations lye dormant many Years, and so 'tis no wonder that it is fo drowzy, and scarcely opens its Eyes to fee and perceive Intellectual and Spiritual Pleafures. But it is certain that these are the only generous and masculine ones, and such as can never be found in the commission of Sin. No; these Spiritual and Mental Delights are the Companions only of Vertuous and Godly Actions.

4/y, That which hugely disparages the pretended Pleasures of Sin is this, that they are short and transient. Say the best of them, yet they are of no long duration, we enjoy them but a few Hours, or perhaps but Minutes; for all the Pleasure vanishes as soon as we begin to rested upon it, and examine what it is; and then presently Sorrow takes place, a lasting and durable Sorrow.

5ly, Then,

5h, Then, thou who pleadest for the Pleasure of Sin, and makest that a bar to thy Repentance, wilt foon find that Sin is the most unpleasant, uneasy, bitter and painful thing imaginable. Tho' when it first sought for entertainment in thy Soul thou wert perswaded of its Pleasantness, yet now after it hath got admittance, thou wilt experience the excessive Trouble and Torment which it creates in thy Breast. This is well represented in 70b 20. 12. speaking there of the wicked Man, Tho Wickedness be sweet in his Mouth, tho he hide it under his Tongue, tho' he spare it, and for sake it not, but keep it still in his Mouth, yet his Meat in his Bowels is turn'd, it is the gall of Asps within him. His dainty Morsels now become loathsome, the Sweetness is turn'd into Bitterness, the seeming Pleasure and Relish he felt is chang'd into Gall and Wormwood. There is, it is granted, a feeming Pleafure in Sin, there is Honey and the Honey-comb. Sweets and Delights in abundance: But this Honey carries a Sting along with it; and all the former Pleasure and past Delight will not compound for that fore Sting, that Worm of Conscience, that Pain and Torture which attend it now, and are but forerunners of greater hereafter. You fee then at what rate you fin: And he must be strangely beforted who can perswade himself that there is any Pleasure in being a Sinner.

6ly and lastly, This is an undeniable Proposition, That there is no Pleasure like that of Holines, and the sincere Practice of Christianity. All its Principles lead to the noblest and most elevated Delights; it inspires us with rational and solid Joy; it administers the most real, substantial and lasting Comfort. Rejoice in the Lord always is a Christian and Apostolical Exhortation; and indeed

accom-

deed no Man is so capable of practising it as a true Christian; for he, of all Men, hath the greatest Reason to gild his Countenance with Joy and Chearfulness; the Favour of God, the firm Hopes of the Beatifical Vision, being sufficient Motives thereunto. Is it not vouched by the infallible Word of God, that Wildom's ways are ways of Pleasantness? And he, who is Truth it felf, assures us, that his Yoke is easy, and his Burden is light. And the beloved Disciple acquaints us, that his Commandments are not grievous. Do not the same Holy Writings testify, that a good Heart, or Conscience, is a continual Feast? The Holy Man entertains himself with this, and fares more deliciously than Sinners do on their choicest Delicacies. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my taste, saith the Spouse the Church, Cant. 2. 3. Religion is the greatest spring of Mirth, the mother of the truest Pleasure, the parent of the folidest Joy. None but Vertuous and Righteous Persons can truly rejoice.

Yea, Christianity and a Godly Life are productive of Earthly and Bodily Pleasure. I hope the Voluptuous Man will listen to this: Let him do fo, and I will make it appear that what I fay is most true. I can demonstrate that it is a Religious Life which gives us the highest Sense of Bodily Pleasure and Delight; for it puts us into the way wherein Sweetness only can be perceiv'd and fully relish'd by us. The Reason is this, because it drives us from Excess, and gratifying our inordinate Lusts, which indeed commit a Rape upon Nature, and violently turn it out of its course, and make us uncapable even of Corporeal Delight. Hence it is that Continence, and Contentedness (which is the Continence of the Soul) are

accompanied with those natural and innocent Pleasures which the incontinent and discontented can never arrive to. Hence it is, that he who is moderate in his Diet, and loads not his Stomach with eating, nor his Bladder or his Skull with excessive drinking, is quicker in his perception of Pleasure in the use of Meats and Drinks, than that Man who is given to Intemperance in either; that is, is continually at the Wine, and is always gorging himself. It is recorded as a Proverbial Saying among the Jews, and very pertinent to

\* Cupienti omnia fibi fore femper grata atq; jucunda, necesse est ut iis raro utatur. our purpose \*, That he that would have every Thing grateful and sweet to him, must rarely use it. For what is too often used is loathed;

and therefore he that would taste Pleasure must but seldom enjoy it. Whence it follows, that Moderation and Temperance bring true Pleasure. Thus Religion and Vertue carry even Bodily Plea-

fure with them.

And as for the Ravishments and Delights of the Soul, they are acknowledg'd by all Persons that have any sense of Goodness and Vertue. There is no Pleasure and Transport like that of Holiness; and it cannot be otherwise, because this fecures a Man, and places him in fafety, and then he is at Rest, and may fing and rejoice; whereas Sin, though it may tickle that Man into profuse Laughter, yet it never gives him any Security of his Condition. Hence that is most true concerning Wisdom, Her Conversation hath no Bitterness; and to live with her hath no Sorrow, but Mirth and Toy, Wifd. 8. 16. To serve our Maker, and to obey his just and holy Laws, is attended with Peace and Serenity of Mind, and is its own Reward.

But now, if after all that hath been said, some shall mention the Hardships and Difficulties which are sound in Religion, and the Exercise of a Holy Life; I Answer, That the suture Happiness in Heaven will make amends for all. You have reason then to digest well the severe Injunctions of Mortification and Self-denial, and to practice the Duty of Repentance, tho' these seem to be harsh and unpleasant Employments. You must with Moses have respect unto the Recompence of Reward: And then you will chuse rather to undergo those severe Tasks, and to suffer Affliction for the discharge of your Duty than to enjoy the Plea-

fures of Sin for a feafon.

If you feriously weigh these Particulars, the fore-mention'd Objection will foon be answered, and Sin must not at any time for the future plead Delight and Pleasure. Take Sin altogether, that is, take it with its fore-runners, its attendants, and all its consequences, and it is impossible you should think it to be pleasurable. Let a Man reckon the many Tears he must shed, the many Sorrows and Perplexities of Soul he must unavoidably go through, the deep Sighs and Groans he must send up to Heaven, the grievous Wounds of Conscience, and the Restlesness of Mind he must endure, the sad and pensive Hours he must undergo, and all the other dismal Effects which he must feel, and then certainly he can find no fuch thing as Pleasure in Sin. The short is this; If he doth not repent of his Sins, then Eternal Misery will be his Portion: If he doth repent, you fee how fad and doleful his Condition for some time must be: He must groan and lament under the burden of his Guilt, and with great Difficulty at last obtain the Pardon of his Sins. And thus much in An**fwer** 

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fwer to that Objection and Excuse which Sinners are wont to make, to wit, that the way which they are in is accompanied with Pleasur and Delight, and therefore they are unwilling to go out of it. I hope I have made it evident, that a Sinner hath no true Pleasure. If he hath some shew and resemblance of it, yet there is no substance or reality. Or, say that he finds a real sensual Pleasure, yet considering how short it is, and how it is follow'd with Woe and Wretchedness, it cannot deserve the name of Pleasure. In a word, If there be Pleasure in Sin, then there is Pleasure in Hell; then Damned Men and Devils live a pleasant Life.

2ly, There are others, who being defirous to retain their Sins, and are by no means willing to repent of them, plead that they are profitable and gainful. We shall, say they, wrong our selves in our Estates if we repent; our usual Gains and Incomes will be cut off. Some of our best Profits come in by our Sins. If we should lay aside our usual Methods of getting Gain, that is, of Lying and Cheating, of Couzening and Defrauding, of grinding the Faces of the Needy, (for thence also our Grift is made up) and of using all ways and artifices to raise our Fortunes in the World, if we should lay aside these Methods, how should we be able to thrive and prosper? If we take this course, we shall soon be reduced to Poverty and Want, and in a fhort time we shall not know how to live. What would you have us to do then? Must we starve, or must we beg? Must we be put upon Repenting of our Sins when it will certainly prove our Ruine? We live and maintain our Families by our Sins. Will you be so hard-hearted and cruel to us as to perswade us to impoverish our felves

felves and those that belong to us? Thus you may

imagine some Sinners to discourse.

Yea, you need not barely imagine it, for they do really and actually discourse after this manner; they plead for themselves after such a rate as this. Thus did those Sinners argue who are mention d in Prov. 1. 13. We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil, say they: We shall grow Rich and Wealthy by our evil Projects and Enterprizes. Their Argument was fetch'd ab utili. And indeed this is a very alluring Topick; this was that which the Devil affaulted our Saviour with last of all, imagining that this would prevail, though his other Temptations proved fuccessess. All these things will I give thee, saith he. He is no pedling Chapman, he bids very largely, yea, he offers more than is in his power to bestow: However, he knows it is a tempting Bait, and therefore he shews it; he holds out Gain and Advantage; he promises great Revenues and Incomes; and by these he works upon a great part of Mankind, and makes them continue still in their evil practices, and will not fuffer them to entertain so much as a Thought of Repentance. But to those Sinners who are thus deluded by Satan, and hug their Sins because they think them to be profitable, I have these three things to offer: 1. It is a huge Mistake that there is any Profit in Sin. But 2. It is certain that there is a real Profit in 3. Impenitency and Ungodliness are so far from being profitable, that they are frequently the procurers of all Misery and Calamity.

1. I say, these Men labour under a gross Mistake, and that is this, that there is Profit in Sin. There is no greater Falshood in the World than this, if Truth it self is to be credited by us; for

our Saviour's words run directly counter to its Mat. 16. 26. What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his Soul? This Question is a downright negative: A Man is not profited. at all, though he should by his finful Courses purchase Worldly Gain. He is no real gainer by the bargain, because he loses his Soul. But if fond and deluded Men will call that Profit which is not, who can help it? The Ifraelites prefer'd their Onions and Garlicks before Quails and the Food of Angels. The filly Gadarens prefer'd their Swine before our Saviour's Presence and Society. We laugh at those simple Indians who barter'd away their Gold, and Pearls, and Diamonds, for Toys and little Trinkets, for Beads and Counters, and fuch worthless things. But the practice of Sinners is much more ridiculous, who neglect the most precious and valuable things, and change them for those which are worthless and of no value. Their constant practice is to frame false and perverse notions of things, they understand not the true worth of them, yea, they imagine that they do themselves a kindness, that they take the right course to thrive and prosper in the World; when they are the most unkind People to themselves imaginable, and they put themselves into a way wherein there is no real Profit and Gain to be found. This I find to be the fense of that Saying

\* Uhi nulla Lex, ibi nulla farina.
Avoth. cap. 3.

of Rabbi Eliezer \*, Where there is no Meal; i.e. where the Law is not observ'd, there expect no Prosit, no Advantage. Men think to be great Gainers by their Sins, but there

think to be great Gainers by their Sins, but there is no fuch thing. The Schoolmen tell us that Sin is a mere privation, it is nothing in it felf. This we are fure of, that it is nothing-worth to Sin-

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ners. It is a Fool's bargain; nothing is got by it, but exceeding much is lost. It is therefore most appositely said, that Sinners sell themselves for nought, Isa. 52. 3. they barter away their Souls for a cypher. No Price is paid on the Devil's part; he hath nothing to give them, though he promises (as you heard) great things. Nothing on a Man's part is received; he finds no real advantage notwithstanding all the fair pretences that are made. All the Fruit and Prosit Men have of their Sins is but a mere dream, it is imaginary and phantastication.

cal, as well as their Pleasure is.

What Profit is there in Curfing, and Swearing, and Blaspheming? That Man who saith he can discern any such thing in these Sins, shamefully imposes upon his own Reason and Understanding. Or if some little Advantage attends other Sins, it is so inconsiderable that it is not worth speaking of. Judas betray'd his Master, and his Reward was Thirty Pieces of Silver, which amounts but to 3 1. 15 s. in our Money. Did this make amends for his hanging himself, and for the eternal perdition of his Soul? Or, if he had not laid violent hands on himself, would this Sum of Money have done him any good? What a poor accession to his Income would this have been? Or, fay that far greater Incomes accrue to Sinners by their evil deeds, yet how favourably soever Men think of these now, and count the Profit of them, they will have another Opinion of them afterwards. At the great Audit of the World, at the last Day of Accounts their Sins will be found to be profitless. The petry Gains which Sinners had here will not compound for what they shall lose then, even Eternal Happinels. Their trifling Gains can never recompense the Loss of their

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Souls. What shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? said he who knew what the Price of Souls was, he coming into the World on purpose to Redeem them, to lay down his Life for their Ranfom.

Secondly, You talk of Profit, but why do you not consider this, that there is certain and solid Profit in Religion and a holy Life & Wisdom is good with an Inheritance, faith the Royal Preacher. This is certain that this Divine Wisdom hath ever a fair Inheritance entail'd upon it. Our very worldly Interest is included in our Duty: We must necessarily love Christianity if we hate not our selves. We are oblig'd to be Vertuous even by the Maxims of Policy. In point of Prudence and Interest we are concern'd to be Meek and Humble, to be Just and True, to be Sober and Temperate, to be Loving and Charitable, and to do all that God enjoins If we feek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness in the first place, all Advantages of the World which are fitting and good for us, shall be conferr'd upon us. Godliness is profitable to all things, faith the Apostle. Godliness is great gain, saith the same Inspired Writer. Religion and Holiness are the best Wealth, the fairest Estate, and he that is Rich towards God is the richest and happiest Man. A pious Person hath a liberal Subsistence now: His Duty and his Interest are twisted together; and besides, he hath Rewards in the other World to entertain his Hope. The prospect and assurance of Treasures in Heaven are Profit and Advantage to him now.

Thirdly and lastly, It is oftentimes seen that a wicked Course of Life is the ready way to outward Misery and Calamity. Poverty and Distress, and all evil Accidents attend it; so far is it from

being

being Profitable and Gainful. Let the Sinner then call to Mind what Zophar fays, speaking of the rich and thriving Sinner, He bath swallowed down Riches, and he shall vomit them up again; God shall cast them out of his belly, Job 20. 15. As much as to fay, though he hath in some Measure gained by his Sins, yet this Gain shall be of a short duration; and even whilst it lasteth, it agrees not well with him, it lies heavy and uneasy on his Conscience. However, he shall at last be forced to confess that Sin is not the way to Thrive, yea, that it brings Men into the greatest Infelicity and Misery. Some Sins especially are observed to do this. Have you not feen or heard of a Vicious Person who made it his whole Business to grow Rich, and to compass a great Estate, and to that End wronged his Neighbours, oppressed the Poor, accustomed himself to Lying and Cheating, and all Dishonest Arts; Have you not feen fuch a Person publickly disgraced and exposed? Have not his Frauds been detected? Have not his Villanous Practices become his Punishment? And hath not Poverty (instead of a great Estate) been his Purchase? Do you not see sometimes that Misery and Distress are entail'd upon Vices? Let no Man then talk of the Gain and Profit of being Vicious. He may eafily be confuted by every day's Observation and Experience. Let no Man presume to continue in his Sins with hopes of Thriving and Prospering in them, but rather let him be deterr'd from the ways of Vice by the Consideration of the Evil. the Temporal Evil which attends it.

Let me upon this occasion speak freely unto you that are Men of Traffick and Commerce, (and this Town affords very great Numbers of that Rank) Your Employ is to Buy, and Sell, and get

Gain; and this is fo far from being Unlawful, that it is highly Commendable and Praise-worthy, yea, 'tis absolutely necessary for Support of the World. Divine Providence vouches your Employment and Calling: You ferve God whilft you are Industrious and Diligent in your Traffick with Men. But then you must be careful that you use no Unlawful Practices in a Lawful Trade. Never let it enter into your minds, that unjust Dealings are the way to Thrive; but be throughly perswaded of the contrary, viz. that by Defrauding and Lying, by Cozening and Grinding the Faces of the Poor, and any finful and unwarrantable Practifes, you take the direct course to have your Estates blafted; you derive a Curse upon your selves, and upon those who appertain to you. Let not that then prevail with you to commit Sin, or to continue it without Repentance, viz. that you shall Gain by it. There is no fuch thing; whatever some fond and deluded Minds imagine.

Let me commend that weighty Text to your Consideration, Rom. 6. 21. What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. Observe here, 1. The Nature of past Sin, and of Sin whilst it is committed; there is no fruit, that is, no Benefit, no Advantage accruing to you at that time. 2. Obferve the Nature of Sin as to the present. Every time that you look on it, you cannot but blush and be asham'd. 3. Mark what Sin will prove for the future. Mind the Conclusion of it: The end of those things is death. Thus there is a Complication of all kinds of Evil in Sin. The Reward of it is Unfruitfulness. What fruit had you? that is, none at all. And therefore, Sins are deservedly stiled by the same Apostle, The unfruitful works of dark-

ness, Eph. 5. 11. Again, Sin is a base and dishonest thing; and therefore is the Mother of Shame and Confusion. Whereof ye are now ashamed. But suppose thou canst brook the Unfruitfulness and Unprofitableness of Sin, and the Shame which follows it, yet tell me whether thou canst endure that fatal close of it which the Apostle adds: The end of those things is death; everlasting Death and Destruction. Now then, when thou art tempted to Sin, and tempted to continue in it, and not to repent of it, because thou thinkest there is some Profit in it: when such a Temptation besets thee, call to mind this Text of St. Paul, read it seriously, and think on it in good earnest, and the Temptation will then vanish. Thou art assured from these Words, that Sin is Fruitless, Shameful and Mortal. Especially meditate on this last; the End and Isfue of Sinning is Death. Let thine Eye be constantly fix'd on this, and when Sinners entice thee to ungodly Practifes, confider what the End of them will be.

If the Adulterer knew certainly that his lewd Embraces would conclude with his Winding-sheet, that some mortal Disease would snatch him away the next moment after the fatisfaction of his Lust: Or if the Drunkard were really perswaded that deadly Poyson were mixed with the Liquor which he was about to drink: Or if the Swearer knew affuredly that he should be struck Dead on the place, as foon as he swore the next Oath, you will be apt to believe, that neither the Adulterer, nor the Drunkard, nor the Swearer, would be so daring as to commit those Sins. Why then do they commit them when they are told by the Apostle, that the end of those things is Death? Why do they not abstain from such Vices, when the Infallible Word

Word of God affures them that they will prove Fatal and Destructive to them, that they bring the Curse of God with them here, and that they shall be recompensed with Eternal Torments hereafter? They must be strangely infatuated, if the Thoughts of this End do not effectually influence upon them. This Consideration is made use of by Solomon, to repell the Temptation of the Sin of Drunkenness, Prov. 23. 31. [Look not upon the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, אחריתו \* when it moves it self aright. \* At last in novissimo suo. it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder. In its last going off, in its Close and Farewel it proves very pernicious. Think then of this, faith the Wife Man, when thou art in the midst of thy Mirth and sensual Entertainments, and let this curb and check thy Jollity. Look at the End, consider what the Conclusion will be; know that after the Comick part there is a Tragical one to come. The End of these things is deadly and destructive. And this may be applied to all other Sins: I may fay of them as Abner faid to Joab in another case, Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? Knowest thou not that thy Sweets will end in Gall and Wormwood? Solemon hath rightly observed that Fools make a mock of Sin; they make a Play and Pastime of it, as the Philistines did with Samson; but as he pulled the House on their Heads, so will Sin prove Fatal and Mortal to them. Their end is destruction, as the Apostle speaks of Carnal Men, in Phil. 3. 19. Sin may feem profitable for a short season, but soon after it will be discovered how Mischievous it is. Or if some Men are so favoured by the Devil as to enjoy their Lusts a considerable time, and be permitted to prosper in the World, yet his Kindness

to them is no other than this; that they shall be

devour'd last of all.

So then, the most prosperous Sinners may take up these Words, in Wisd. 5. 8. What hath Pride profited us, or what good have Riches with our Vanity brought us? There is no Good, no Profit, no Advantage at all. Give no credit then to Satan when he promises these to you; but believe the holy Men of God, who acquaint you that Ruine and Destruction are the attendants of Sin, and that Godliness is the only true Gain both here and hereafter. And when you hear some Men plead for the retaining of their Sins because they are their Livelihood, and bring them in a constant Revenue, remind them of Matth. 5. 29. If thy right Eye. offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : and if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from That is, if thou indulgest some Sin which is as dear and delightful to thee as thy Right Eye, or if thou hast another Sin as useful and profitable to thee as thy Right Hand, which brings thee in Gain, and Maintains thee, yet thou art ingaged to renounce and abandon these. And observe why Christ adds Moreover in that place; It is profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell. This is twice utter'd by our Saviour, ver. 29, 30. and 'tis a direct Answer to the Objection which Sinners are wont to make concerning the Profitableness of Sin; Christ roundly and plainly tells them what is Profitable, viz. To leave their Sins, to cast off their Lusts, to Repent of all their evil doings, lest they be swallowed up suddenly of Hell-flames. Thus you see this Objection which Sinners raise concerning the Profit of Sin is utterly invalid and insignificant.

But

But there is another Objection yet behind. And as I have already answered the Cavils of the Sons of Pleasure, and of the Great Mammonists of the World, fo now I am ingaged in the next place to give a Reply to the Objection which some Ambitious and Vain-glorious Sinners are ready to fart. Some that have a Sense (though a very corrupt and perverse one) of Reputation, hold us in hand that they would Repent of their Sins, if they should not thereby incur Reproach and Ignominy; if they should not be Reviled and Laugh'd at ; if those that have been their Companions and Brethren in Iniquity would not fcoff at them, and call them Precifians and Fanaticks. They shall lose the good Word of their Fellow-finners; and perhaps their Friends and Relations, who encouraged them in their evil Practifes, will frown upon them, and shew themfelves unkind to them. A goodly Excuse this is, and one would scarcely believe that any who bear the Name of Men and reasonable Creatures should plead thus for themselves. But yet I fear it is too common in the World. When other Excuses can't be well made use of, then they fly to this; and 'tis to be feared, that very many are discouraged from Repenting of their Sins, and Reforming their Lives, on this very Account, namely, that they shall meet with Scoffs from those whom they have formerly conversed with, especially from their Friends and Kindred. I briefly return an Answer to this OBJECTION in these three particulars,

to be Reviled and Reproached for Righteousness fake. If you leave your Sins, and faithfully discharge your Duty, and then meet with Obloquies and Scoffs from Men, you ought not to be displeafed

fed and discontented, but to go on still in your Duty, and to reckon those Scoffs and Revilings as no real Reproaches, but rather as Scars purchas'd in a just War, Honourable and Noble. You must remember that it hath always been the lot of good Men to be derided by those of another Character. Our Bleffed Saviour himfelf, and all the Primitive Christians, were slander'd and traduced; and if you have the same portion, if you in Obedience to God's Commands live a holy Life, and abhor those Sins which are committed by others, and then are scorn'd and abus'd for this conduct, you have ground of rejoicing, because you fare as your Master and Fellow-Servants have done; And why should you defire or hope to meet with better ufage? The Moralist could say, It is Royal and Honourable to hear ill when you do well. But that yields a higher Solace which our Master himfelf pronounces; Bleffed are ye when Men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you fally for my sake, Mat. 5. 11. Be not discouraged then: by a godly Repentance abandon all your evil ways, and take no notice at all of the evil Tongues, and Railing Language of befotted Sinners. The godliest Men have been despised, abused, and evilly treated; and you must not think it strange, or take it ill that you are so too. Therefore let not this discourage you from heartily Repenting of your past Sins, and changing your Course of Life.

2. Let me ask you, will you lose Heaven for fear of being Revil'd and Laugh'd at? When Christ had pronounc'd that Beatitude, Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, he adds, Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, ver. 12. as much as to say, Heaven will be a sufficient Recompense

compense to you for all the Reviling Language which fell from the Mouths of the worst of Men. If Heaven shall be your Reward, you need not trouble your felves for the Reviling Names given you on Earth. If God will honour you with his Favour, you have no reason to court the good Opinion of the vilest of Men. Are you afraid of being evil spoken of here, and yet are you not afraid of coming short of that blessed Euge at the last day, Well done good and faithful Servant? Will you continue in your Sins without Repentance, to purchase the good will of your Friends and Companions in Vice, and yet are you not mindful to gain the Approbation and Applause of Angels and Saints at the great day of Judgment? I pray ferioufly confider of this, and think how Reasonable it is to prefer the Favour of God before that of

3. You are careful, you fay, to gain Respect and Credit, and you can't endure Difgrace and Reproach; but let me tell you, you must take the right Course to attain the one, and to avoid the other. For (let the deluded World fay what they will) to be wicked is the highest Dishonour, but to forfake Sin, and to be Vertuous and Pious, is truly Honourable. How perverse and mad are the Judgments of Men? We see, and may speak it with forrow, that a Religious and Sober Life is Difgraceful among the greatest numbers of Men. He that is watchful and circumspect, that keeps himself unsported from the World, and makes Religion his business, is a despised Person: some Ignominious Name is fasten'd on him, his Company is shunn'd, his Actions are censur'd, and nothing that he faith or doth is acceptable; whereas it is an undeniable Truth, that Ungodliness is the only

And

real Reproach. It was Sin that first introduced Shame; and ever fince, Shame is become the Punishment due to Sinners, not only a Shame in their own Breafts, which is an inward Grief and Perturbation, but Shame among Men, Infamy and Reproach. For vicious Actions are always Infamous in the fight of understanding Persons. Wickedness renders a Man vile and contemptible, it procures him an evil Name, Difrespect, Disgrace, and Dishonour. However, Shame and Disgrace will be the Close and Upshot of a vicious Life. In the Event, Sin will prove dishonourable. Sinners shall awake unto shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. 12. 2. But as for Holiness, it is in it self Honourable, it hath real worth to commend it; for this is that which makes Men really to Deferve, and therefore is the only thing which they may justly value themselves upon, and for which they merit to be regarded by others. This imprints upon us the Character of Noble and Generous Souls, this gains us Esteem and Repute wherever we appear, and makes us sometimes admired by the wicked themselves. This is the best Friend of Fame and Honour, and carries more Glory with it than Empire and Sovereignty. But Vice is Beggarly, Sordid, and Infamous: it makes Men despicable and slavish, it argues them to be low and mean-spirited, and ranks them in the number of vile Persons. In short, Sin is Reproachful and Shameful, Base and Ignoble; and nothing is truly so but it. There is no Disgrace in the World but Sin. The Scorn and Reproach which finners are afraid of, and by reason of which, they lay, they dare not leave their evil Courses, are not any real Disgrace. No wise Man will be concern'd for them, but rather glory in them.

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And then for that part of the Objection which represents it as a very hard and dreadful thing to lofe the good-will of Friends and Relations; and therefore upon that account some say they are loth to leave their evil ways, for fear of offending and disobliging their Friends, I particularly Answer, 1st, That our Obligation to God must superfede all Obligations whatfoever, when they fland in competition with, or opposition to his Will. Obey God tho' you are fure to displease all the World, and particularly your nearest and dearest Friends. 2dly, Be not afraid to displease Men, and even those to whom you are most nearly Allied; for by doing your Duty you make God your Father, your Friend, your Patron, and you cannot have any Affinity or Friendship which will prove so Beneficial to you. Be it known to you, that when you disoblige some Persons by abandoning your Sins, and turning to God, you do at the same time engage Him to be your Friend, and to be Kind and Loving to you. This was experimented by that holy Man, Psalm 27. 10. When my Father and my Mother for fake me, then the Lord will take me up. And this was promifed by our Bleffed Saviour, Mat. 19. 29. Every one that hath forfaken Brethren, or Sifters, or Father, or Mother, for my name sake, shall receive an hundred-fold bere, besides that they shall inherit eternal Life. If by Repenting of your former Sins, and actually relinquishing them, you incur the displeasure and illwill of those whom we are nearly Related to, you shall be Recompensed abundantly. God will receive you when they cast you off, he will provide for you when they for sake you. When your Friends and Neighbours prove Churlish, you shall more eminently experience the Divine Mercy and Kindnefs. It

It was the gallant Speech of that holy Father Ferom; If I saw my Father (said he) weeping on his Knees before me, and my Mother hanging on my Neck, and my Brethren and Sisters lamenting on every fide, endeavouring to retain me in a finful Life, I would fling my Mother on the ground, I would trample on my Father, I would despise all my Kindred that stand in my way, and I would run to Christ. Let the Zeal of this holy Man inflame us, and put us upon firm Resolves of Repentance, and doing our indispensable Duty, though thereby we act contrary to the perswasions of our Friends and Relations, and wholly lofe their Favour and Affection. Let us fully purpose in our Hearts, that neither Smiles nor Frowns shall tempt us to violate our Consciences, and to offend our God. What tho' the wicked will Jeer and Scoff at you, let not this make you asham'd of a strict and holy Life. Give those Losers leave to Laugh at you, let the Bedlam-world rage; so you can save your felves, it is enough. You must, with Moses, reckon the reproach of Christ (that is, your being reproached for him) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; more advantageous by far than all the Posfessions of this World. To conclude, you are not forbid to purchase Gain and Honour, if in acquiring and enjoying them you keep a good Conscience, and be careful that no Man be injured by your Possessions or Preferments. But this is the thing which I press upon you, that you ought chiefly to be concerned for the Spiritual Riches and Honour, which are true Grace and Holiness. By Godly Repentance you purchase these, and then you are Masters of the best Riches and Honour, as well as of the choicest Pleasures. And thus I hope I have have fully satisfied whatever hitherto hath been Ob-

jelled against the practise of this Duty.

But there is another set of Objections and Excuses which I must encounter. These are not Pleas against Repentance it felf, (as the former ones were) but only against universal and speedy Repentance. First, Against universal Repentance you shall hear a Man plead thus, I am content to part with many Sins: I renounce them, and will never have a kindness for them again; but I only desire this, that feeing I'm willing to part with most of my Sins, I may be indulg'd and dispens'd with as to fome one or a few. Tho' I renounce all open and notorious Vices, yet I hope I may be favour'd as to a fecret one; and feeing I consent to cast off great Sins, I would be permitted to retain some little ones. You see the Objection is double, and therefore I will distinctly answer to both parts of it. First, the Sinner, when he is invited to repent, and when that Duty is urged closely upon him, is brought to this at last, that he consents to the renouncing of all open Sins, but he would be excused by all means as to some secret ones. To which I return this five-fold Answer.

1. God takes notice of secret Sins, therefore you must repent even of them. He knoweth the secrets of the Heart, Pfal. 44. 21. He is acquainted with the inmost Recesses of the Soul; he sees the remotest Corners of the Mind. There is no Sin projected and devised, but he sees and observes it, as he told the wicked Jews, Ezek. 11. 5. I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them. I know what you defign and contrive: tho' you think you keep your Sins secret and unknown, yet I take notice of them, even all your wicked purposes and projects. There is not any creature, faith the

the Apostle, that is not manifest in his fight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. If he knows all things, and particularly your secret and private Offences against him, you must not excuse your repenting of them by pleading their Secrecy, for unto him who

is omniscient nothing is hidden and secret.

2ly, Remember that by fecret Sins, as well as those that are open and publick, God's Law is broken and violated, and on that account you are obliged to repent of one as well as of the other. If then you have any regard to the holy and just Command of the Almighty, if you value his Laws and Precepts, if you reverence his Word and Will, and are perswaded that they are not to be oppofed and refisted by you; if the violation of the Divine Commands be odious to you, and if you bear respect and honour to the Decrees and Injunctions of Heaven, you are then engag'd to renounce all your private and secret Sins, as knowing that thefe, as well as others, are a direct breach of the Injunctions of our Blessed Lawgiver.

3ly, Let this also be remember'd, that secret Sins do hurt and wound the Conscience no less than those that are committed openly and in the view of the World. A Wound in a fecret part of the Body may be as dangerous as one that is in the face, or any other visible part; yea, oftentimes fuch a Wound proves more hurtful and fatal, it being not so easy to discover it, and to apply Remedies for the curing of it. Think your Case the more deplorable because your Consciences are polluted and burden'd with secret Guilt. This is not taken notice of by others, and consequently you may want their seasonable Reproof, you

may be destitute of that aid and assistance which they might afford you, and thereby you are encouraged to hug and cherish that Evil in your

Breafts which will be your Ruine.

4/y, I add yet further, that cherishing of secret Sins is an Argument of a very profligate, and even an Atheistical Spirit: For as repenting of fecret Sins, and avoiding them with great care, is a fign of Integrity and Sincerity of Heart, so the committing and countenancing of fecret Sins is no fmall token of a prophane and very impious difposition of Mind. The Man who daily indulges himself in this fort of Vice, doth in a manner say, that he believes there is no Divine Being to obferve what he doth. This prophane Temper is well express'd to us in Ezek. 8. 12. where after the Prophet had been bid to take notice of the fecret. and private Wickedness of the Idolatrous Israelites, and the curfed Practices of that People in their Retirements, God speaks to him thus, Son of Man, baft thou feen what the Ancients of the House of Ifrael do in the dark, every Man in the Chambers of his Imagery? For they fay, The Lord feeth us not, the Lord hath for aken the Earth; he is not here below to observe our Actions, and so we need not care what we do. And this is repeated in the 9th Chapter, 9th Ver. The Iniquity of the House of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, &c. for they fay, The Lord feeth not; they act the most horrid and abominable things imaginable, and then they perfwade themselves, that because they are done in the dark they are not feen by God. And this, I fear, is the Atheism which attends this way of finning in most Men: they deny the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God, which is the same with denying his Deity. You have little reason then

to excuse your selves from repenting of these Sins, when they are of so vile a Nature, and argue an

Atheistical Temper.

5/y and lastly, Secret Sins will damn you as well as others, therefore make no excuse for them, but speedily repent of them, and forsake them. Read the last words of the Book of Ecclesiastes; God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. This is the Reason or Argument which this Inspired Writer makes use of to perswade Men to Repentance, and to betake themselves to a Holy Life, viz. because God will judge Men for their fecret Sins. There is a Day coming when these shall be laid open and made publick. What was done in the dark shall be exposed to light. That which was unknown and kept from the notice of Men shall then be proclaim'd to the World, and be known to all Men and Angels. And if you shall be judged for secret Sins, assure your selves that you shall be damned for them; for that Judgment is in order to the actual inflicting of Punishment. See then how necessary it is that you repent of these Sins; for if without this you can't avoid being judg'd and condemn'd for them, you must needs think your selves concern'd to Repent, and that speedily. This is it which I now urge upon you: Heartily lament those Sins which you are conscious to your selves you committed in Privacy, and pray with the Penitent Pfalmist, Cleanse thou me from secret Sins, Pfal. 19. 12. Give me 3 hearty Sorrow for those Iniquities which were done by me in fecret. Pardon the Transgressions. of my Thoughts, the wicked Contrivances of my Heart, which none knoweth but my felf. Give: me Repentance for those finful Actions which are

are conceal'd from the Knowledge and Sight of others.

I must proceed next to the other part of the Objection, which was this, We defire to be excused as to some little Sins: We plead not for the gross ones, we are willing to quit and abandon them; but we only request to be spared as to leffer and smaller Faults. We hope we shall be spared as to some lighter Offences and Obliquities. Surely we may be excused here. So that the Plea which these Men make for their Sins is the same with that of Lot in behalf of Zoar, Is it not a little one? And my Soul shall live. Is it not a small and flight Sin, and shall I not live, shall I not be pardon'd, and find Mercy, although I indulge my felf in it? Or, the Sinner may feem to fay with Jonathan, I did but tafte a little Honey, and lo must I die? I have committed a small Sin, I hope this will not prove dangerous and destructive to me. As for greater and more heinous Enormities, I am willing to bid farewel to them, I have nothing to do with the crying Abominations of the Times, I am no notorious and scandalous Sinner, I only beg leave to be indulg'd in some lesser aberrations of my Life.

But alas these are fond Presumptions, and you ought in a special manner to take care that you be not deceived by such vain Arguings. Let me

tell you,

1. You have no reason to excuse your selves from repenting of lesser Sins, for if they be but little (as you say) then you may the more easily leave them. Plead not for that which you can avoid without any difficulty. Chrysostome thinks this to be the sense of the Apostle in Heb. 12. 1. Let us lay aside the Sin which may easily be declined. For so according

according to him that Text is to be rendred, the word word coming from a \* Verb which fignifies to decline or avoid. And fo this here may be thought to be faid in contradiffinction to laying afide eve-

the Apostle had said, Let us not only lay aside every grievous Sin, every ponderous Vice, but even that which is light, and which we may with so much ease cast off. It will be highly offensive to God that you will not quit a small Sin for his sake. If it be a little one, certainly you can have

little or nothing to plead for it.

2. Be more particularly careful to have a Remorse of Conscience, and a hearty Repentance for these Sins, because generally it happens that these Offences are favourably look'd upon, yea, are often overlook'd in Repentance. The Penitent chiefly minds the great and crying Enormities of his Life. These stare him in the Face, and it is impossible he should not take notice of them. Pain and Torture which commonly attend them extort Repentance, and force poor troubled Sinners to look for a Remedy; whereas little Sins and smaller Declensions are not so pressing upon the Conscience, and therefore are not so soon perceiv'd, but oftentimes are pass'd by; or, if they be taken notice of, they are excused and defended. Wherefore you are in a more especial manner concern'd, when you betake your selves to the work of Repentance, to shew your particular dislike of those Sins which are esteemed light and little. But,

3. You call some Sins little, but you have no reason to do so; for I must let you know this, and receive it as an undeniable Truth, that one Duty

is equally obligatory with another, and one Sin is as much forbidden as another; and, if you respect the Command of Heaven against which it is committed, and the Divine Laws which it confronts, hath as great Immorality and Turpitude adhering to it. It is commonly feen that the groffest and prophanest Sinner, sometimes at least, will boggle at some Sins, and startle at some Crimes; and likewise they are observed to make a Conscience of some Duties, and they seem to be very inquisitive after them. The Pharifees (as you read in the Evangelical History) enquired after some Great Commandment, Mat. 22. 36. Master, which is the great and chief Commandment? But you may observe, that when our Saviour told them which was the First and Great Commandment, he adds this, that the Second is like unto it, ver. 39. and he enjoins them both with equal Authority. They are alike necessary, and it is as dangerous to neglect either of them. They are Offences against the Great God, and how then can they be small? And they are in their own nature evil, and contain an intrinsick Vitiosity in them, and on that account they may be ranked with great and gross Sins.

4. Remember that little Sins (such as are little comparatively, little in respect of crying and heinous Offences) if they be multiplied, will amount to the quality of the greatest Sins. Small Transgressions, when they become many, are grievous. Examine thy self therefore whether thou art not guilty of a great number of those Sins which thou callest Little. If it be thus, thou art in a very evil and dangerous State: It is high time that thou Repentest of these Sins; otherwise thou wilt perish for ever. I will remark something to you from

from those words of David in Pfal. 40. 12. Innumerable Evils have compassed me about, mine Iniquities have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my Head, therefore my Heart faileth me. They are like the Hairs of my Head, small indeed, but they are, like those, many, yea innumerable; and in this they are like the Hairs of my Head that they are continually growing and increasing; and consequently tho' they be but little, yet being so multiplied; they are very grievous and provoking, they so press me down that I am not able to look up; the whole heap of them together (notwithstanding they feem light when fingle and alone) becomes heavy and burdensome; it weighs me down, it makes my Heart fail. Drops of Rain are small and inconsiderable, but when they descend in great Plenty we see they fill up vast Channels, and increase into Rivers and Floods, and are of great force and power. Grains of Sand are small, but when they are amass'd together make heaps of as considerable a bulk as Hills and Mountains, and Travellers have been overwhelmed and buried in thefe fandy Sepulchres. You may eafily make the Application; Those Sins which are little, and in respect of others are light, when they come to increase to vast numbers, they change their nature, they prove heavy and preffing, they stifle and overwhelm von of a sudden.

5. Consider this that lesser Offences and Faults, when they grow into a Habit, will certainly be dangerous and fatal to you. What tho' you sin in some lesser matter? Yet because you repeat and reiterate your Sin, and continue in it, and accustom your selves to it, therefore it must needs be that you will hence contract a Habit of Sinning,

and

and when you have done so, you put your selves into the direct way of hardning your Hearts, and then when you would Repent you shall not be able. For tis certain, that a Man may by an habitual course of Sin shut himself out from Repentance; he may bring upon himself a Necessity of Sinning, and an utter Incapacity of ever turning from Sin unto God.

6. Smaller Sins, when they are acted deliberately, and with a clear Knowledge of your Duty, and after Confideration, then they are to be reckon'd as very great and heinous. Examine therefore your felves as to this particular; fee whether you have not finn'd against your Knowledge, and a perfect discovery of your Duty, after deliberate Thoughts and a serious considering of what you were to do. If you have thus sinn'd, tho' in matters of a lesser moment, you have unspeakably in-

creas'd and inhans'd your Fault.

7. Know this also, that Sins, whether they be in greater or lesser matters, when they are loved and delighted in, when they are acted with Pleasure and Satisfaction, they must no longer be said to be little, but they grow exceeding great, and of vast dimensions. Here therefore (as well as before) you must try and search your selves, you must examine your Hearts and Consciences. Ask your selves whether you take delight in this or that Sin which you are pleas'd to call Little: If upon serious Enquiry you find that you do, you must look upon it for the suture as a great and heinous Fault, and you must Repent of it accordingly.

8. and lastly, Smaller Sins, when they are not Repented of, become great, and will certainly prove damnable. And if they be so, do not for shame fay they are little. Be not deluded with false Notions of Things; apprehend aright the nature of Sin and Repentance. The least Sin perfifted in without Repentance will destroy you. When you are exhorted then to the Duty of Repentance, don't quaintly distinguish between great and little Sins. Impenitence makes all Sins great. Resolve therefore against every Sin, whether it be great, or whether it be little. True Repentance makes us fight not only against some reigning Sin, some predominant and notorious Crime, but it bids us also resist and fight against the least and meanest Offences. The Light which God darts into the Mind of a true Convert, is like those Sun-beams which you fee shine through some little cranny: every little mote that fwims and dances in the Air is discovered by them. Semblably the smallest Sins are taken notice of, and plainly discovered, by the Soul which is enlightned with Divine Grace; when these Heavenly Beams are displayed, all those petty Offences which escaped our fight before are manifeltly represented to us. The practice of a true Evangelical Penitent is this, as he wholly renounceth all gross and heinous Enormities, so he strives against the lesser Failings of his Life; for he is apprehensive that these Sins in lighter matters, these Obliquities of a lesser nature, if not Repented of, will hazard his Everlasting Welfare; he knows that even these, if they be indulged and repeated, are sufficient to damn him to all Eternity. You that flatter your felves, and imagine you may be excused from Repenting of these lesser Sins, (as you call them), charge your memories with these several Particulars which I have named, and I hope your Excuses and Objections will vanish. From what I have said it appears, appears, that there can be no just Plea for secret or for little Sins. Your Repentance must be universal; every Sin must be lamented and forsaken.

But how can we Repent of all our Sins, you may fay? Hath not the Pfalmist these words, Who can understand his Errors? If we can't understand them, how can we repent of them? We commit fome Sins, and do not know them to be fuch. What must we do in this Case? I answer briefly, He that distinctly Repents of all the Sins which he knows himself guilty of, doth vertually Repent also of those Sins which he knows not. God will accept of a general Repentance for these (as I have before suggested); and now I will add the Reafon, which is this, because the Heart of a true Penitent is prepared to repent particularly of these unknown Sins; if he could once attain to the knowledge of them. But he that repents not of all his known Sins, repents of none truly; for if he passes by some Sins, it is a sign that he did not fincerely take notice of the rest. There must be a total relinquishing of Sin; you must bid adieu to all your Vices, even those that are most Pleasurable and Delightful, those that are most Gainful and Profitable, those that are most in Credit and Fashion. For he that truly and fincerely hates Sin as it is Sin, and under that very notion, that is, because God is offended at it, and 'tis displeasing in his eye, he hates and abhors all Sin. He faith with David, Pfal. 101. 2. I will fet no wicked thing before my eyes; and as the fame Holy Man in Pfal. 119. 104. I hate every false way. True Repentance is a forfaking of all Sin, and a turning to all Good; and therefore that Man who faith he would be vertuous as to the main, only he begs Indulgence in

in some few Sins, cannot approve himself a true Penitent.

And thus you fee that Plea which Sinners make for the retaining of some Sins is groundless and absurd, and no Man that hath a true Sense of Religion, and understands the nature of Evangelical Repentance, will ever make use of it; and more particularly, no Man that understands and confiders the danger of being damned will venture to indulge himself in any one Sin; for he is told that no unclean thing shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. A fingle Sin, with those qualifications which I have before-mentioned, will exclude him thence. A City may be taken by the Enemy if one Gate be left open, tho' all the rest be shut fast and barricadoed. One Leak in a Ship may as effectually fink it as a hundred. Or, as St. Augufline speaks to this purpose \*,

"What difference is there, " faith he, between a Ship-

" wreck caused by one great

" overwhelming Wave which " finks the Vessel at once, and

" that which happens by the

" Leaking of the Ship, when

"the Water comes in by little and little? One Bullet may dispatch a Man as well as Chain-shot. One fingle Stab may be as mortal as those repeated ones which Cafar receiv'd in the Senate-house. In a refembling manner, one Sin is sufficient to let Satan in, to ruine and destroy us : One Sin unrepented of is sufficient to sink us down into the bottomless Pit of Hell: One Sin is sufficient to give us our mortal wound, and thereby to debar us of Heaven and Happiness.

\* Quid interest ad Naufragium utrum uno grandi fludu Navis obvuatur an paulatim fubrepens aqua Navem fubmergat ? Aug. Epift. The next Objection, or Plea, is against Repenting speedily. When some great Sinners are exhorted to leave their Sins, they reply after this manner: We know there is all the reason in the World that we should Repent of all our Sins, and we know that there can be no Salvation without Repentance. We resolve therefore to set about it in convenient time; but we can't do it at present. We desire to be excused as to that. Seeing we intend and purpose to mind this affair afterwards, why are you so eager with us to dispatch it forthwith? Why must there be such haste? Must we be hurried on to this work? We tell you that we will Repent, and we will set the Time, if that will content you, but we cannot, and we will not Re-

pent now.

I Answer in general, If Men would begin to Repent at the Time they appoint, and fay they will Repent in, we might the better be filent, and let them alone, (though, as I shall shew afterwards, there is Danger in that too) but do we not fee that they feldom or never keep their word? Wherefore it is but a Deceit and Delusion which Satan puts upon them, and which their naughty Hearts comply with, and thereby ruine themselves, I say 'tis but a Cheat to resolve to Repent, and to set a certain Time for it, when they are followed close by the Preacher, who in many Sermons together calls upon them to Repent, or when particular Judgments and peculiar Acts of Providence alarm their Confciences. This is only to make some shew of performing this Duty hereafter; this is done to fatisfy the Rebukes of their own Minds, and to divert the Thoughts of present Repentance, and in a more plaufible way to put it off for ever. Have you not known some bad Debtors, who being often

often call'd upon and urged to pay what they owe, require still further Time ? and then, they fay, they will not fail; but when that time comes, they are as backward as before, and their Money is as hard to come by then as at first. Just so fares it with fome Sinners; they will by no means Repent prefently, but they make very fair promifes of doing it afterwards, and perhaps they affign a Time when they intend to do it. But observe it, they rarely or never keep their words; they are as far from Repenting when that Time arrives as ever they were. It is clear therefore that they never really and fincerely intended to Repent. But their whole business was a kind of Imparlance, a craving of longer Time, merely in order to a redious Demur, and this only that they might be excused

from Repenting at all.

But however, let us suppose what they say to be true, and that they really purpose to Repent fome time or other; yet let us hear why it is that they put off their Repentance in the mean time. Surely they have some plausible Pretence and Plea for it. First then, one saith, I am busy at prefent, but when my Employment is over, then I'll betake my felf to this work. Secondly, Another faith, I am young, healthful and strong; I may therefore afford to delay my Repentance for a time, but I will certainly Repent when I am old. I will return an Answer to both these Excuses and Evasions: And first, whereas some Sinners are heard to fay, We are not at Leisure to Repent: we have a great deal of Business of the World upon us: if we should leave it, we should be very injurious to our felves; but when that is finish'd, we will find Time to Repent, we will fet about that great Work in good earnest. 1. I

is this, Will not your Business and Occasions be as great and urgent hereafter as they are now; nay, will they not be greater? The World perhaps will take up your Time as much then; it hath Things enough to employ you about; and it may be your Work will increase every day. You remember the Variety of Business which those pretended who were invited to the Marriage-Feast: A Field, a Farm, a Yoke of Oxen, a Wife, were the Impediments which they pleaded in their behalf. So then you'll never want matter for Excuse, if you plead Business as your reason why

you do not Repent.

2. I Answer, you pretend Business; but I pray what Bufiness is there of so great Consequence as this which I exhort you unto? Is not this the main Concern? Can you rationally prefer any thing before it? Must not all other things give way to this? Is it not of the greatest weight and importance to obtain the Favour of God, and the Pardon of your Sins? And can these be obtained without Repentance? Remember the words of the Text, Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. You cannot reasonably expect the latter unless you perform the former. You talk of Business, but what Business is to be compar'd with the Conversion and Salvation of your Souls? Is not the Interest of your Immortal Spirit to be prefer'd before any other Interest whatfoever? Repentance is absolutely necessary in order to Eternal Happiness, it being the indispensible Condition of Remission of Sins, and consequently of Salvation. What shall we do to be faved? faid they in Alts 2. 37. and the Answer was, Repent. So that 'tis evident, that the thing which

we are to do in order to Salvation is Repentance. Flatter not your selves then; think not that I am speaking to you of an indifferent thing. No: your Everlasting Welfare and Bliss are involved in

what I now offer to you.

O then, whoever thou art, what Folly art thou guilty of, who lookest after every thing but that which is most necessary? Hast thou lived so many Years, and heard so many Sermons of Repentance, and knowest how indispensible a Duty this is, and yet takest no care to practise it? Knowest thou not that thy Reading, Hearing and Praying, fignify nothing without Repentance? Knowest thou not that thou art under the Wrath and Curse of God unless thou Repentest? Knowest thou not that if thou diest in this State of Impenitency, thou art miserable to Everlasting Ages? Hast thou any Sense of these things, and yet dost thou prefer any Business before Repenting of thy Sins? O be not fo blind and fortish, act not so wildly and extravagantly. Be throughly perswaded that all things are Trifles and Toys, and mere Impertinencies, which divert thee from embracing Opportunities of Repentance, and take thee off from pursuing the great Work of Amendment of Life. Be perswaded then now, whilst it is called to day, to heatken to the Voice of God's Spirit, and of his Ministers who earnestly invite you to Repentance. Let none here reply in the Language of that Parable, I pray thee have me excused, I have this Employ or that Concern to mind, and I am not yet at leisure to be Sober, to be Just, to be Religious. Let no such words proceed from your mouths; but lay aside all Business for this one indispensible Work of Repentance. Let that suffice in Answer to the first part of the Objection which fome

fome Sinners make, namely, that they are not at leisure to Repent, they have some other Business

and Employment to follow.

But I must now return an Answer to the second part of the Objection, which is this, Let me alone, I pray, faith the Sinner, suffer me to enjoy my feif whilft I'm young, strong and healthful: I am now in those Years wherein I may be pardon'd if I follow my Pleasures, and indulge my felf in some Follies; but when this Time is over, and when my Youthful Vigour and Health fail me, I will fet about the Work which you speak of, that is, I will Repent of all my Sins. When I am Sick or Old, I will be fure to bid the Vanities of the World farewel, I will put by all the Enticements of the Flesh, and I will repel all the Temptations of Satan, I will addict my felf wholly to Religion, and do nothing but Pray, and Read and Meditate, and exercise my self in all Acts of Devotion. But the time of performing these great things is not yet come; some Years hence will be foon enough: Or fome Time or other will serve, but now I cannot attend to such ferious Work. The Sinner feems to reply to the Preacher, or to any other Person who calls upon him to Repent, as Falix did to St. Paul, Go thy way for this time, I will call for thee when I have a convenient season. Or it is well if some do not use the Language of the Devils to Christ, Why comest thou to torment us before the time? Why do you urge us to that Work which you know will be fo uneasy and troublesome to us? And why do you so earnestly press us to do it presently? Is there such Haste of it? We intend to Repent before we dye. We hope 'tis Time enough yet. Why should we begin too foon? And 'tis too foon till Sickness or Old

Old Age seize upon us. Then we will do this Business which you are so importunate with us to perform. In the mean time we will rejoice in our Youth, and walk in the ways of our Hearts, and in the sight of our Eyes.

To this pernicious Language and Evasion of Sinners I return an Answer in these two Particulars: 1. Consider this, that God calls upon you to Repent now: You must observe his Time, and not your own, and therefore you can't be excus'd from Repenting forthwith. 2. Consider the unspeakable Danger of deserring your Repentance.

First, I say, Consider that God calls thee to Repent betimes, and there is Reason that thou shouldst observe his Time, and Repent when he bids thee. It is not left to thy own liberty to do this when thou pleasest. God, who hath an absolute and fovereign Command over thee, strictly enjoins thee to return to him Now, without any farther delay. To day if you will hear his voice, har-den not your Hearts, Pfal, 95. 8. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, Eccl, 12. 1. And. what faith the Apostle? 2 Tim. 2. 12. Fly Youthful Lusts; as much as to fay, You must dedicate the First-fruits of your Years to God; you must begin to be Religious betimes; you must devote your selves to the Service of God whilst you are young, healthful and active. Or suppose you were not directly and expresly commanded to discharge the Duty of Repentance, and turning unto God forthwith, yet the general Command of Repentance is so to be interpreted and understood, that you are by vertue of that to Repent presently. It is a Maxim in Law, that where no Time is set, the Debt is presently due; where no Day of Payment is limited, you are obliged to pay forthwith,

This may be well applied to our present matter: The Debt of Repentance is due, and though the particular Time of discharging it were not set down, yet by vertue of the general Injunction, and our own Obligation, we are bound to do it immediately. And this may encourage us to do fo, that God more especially accepts the early performance of Repentance; and on the contrary, they that wilfully and obstinately put it off, are justly despised and rejected by God. Therefore as you defire to be graciously accepted of him, Repent now; for now is the acceptable Time, now is the Day of Salvation. God hath commanded you to lay hold on this Opportunity,

therefore think it best to do so.

The fecond part of my Answer to the Objection is this, That it is unspeakably dangerous to delay your Repentance, and to put it off 'till Sickness or Old Age. Consider, I beseech you, the great Hazard and Peril you run into by acting thus. And here I will particularly represent unto you the Uncertainty of your ever returning to God, and repenting of your evil ways, if you do it not prefently. 1. You are uncertain of your Lives, and you cannot tell whether you shall be forewarn'd by a foregoing Sickness, which is one thing you talk of. 2. Suppose Sickness be the forerunner of Death, yet I will make it evident to you that Sickness (especially such as it may happen to be) is a bad Season to Repent in. 3. Suppose you fall not into any Sickness, but that you are hale and lufty, yet you know not whether you shall enjoy the Means of Grace, whereby Repentance is usually wrought in the Soul. 4. Though you should enjoy the Means, yet you are not certain of the Influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone can make the Means effectual. 5. You may be disabled to Repent, not only by the just Judgment of God upon you, he denying his Bleffing, but you may find it impossible to Repent even upon. your own Account, viz. by reason of your bardning your Hearts by a long Continuance in your Sins. These Things being duly considered will take off the force of the above-mentioned Objection, and the Sinner will have nothing to fay for himself.

First, I say, Consider how uncertain your Lives. are. What is your Life? It is even a Vapour that appeareth for a short time, and then vanishes away, Jam. 4. 14. A Man's Life, in our Law, is counted but Seven Years. What is it, think you, in the accounts of Religion? It is far shorter, and accordingly it is set forth in Holy Scripture by every thing almost that is short, fickle and transient, Therefore the Young Man's Excuse is as fond and foolish as himself, when he saith he finds himself hale and strong, and in good plight, and that his Spirits are fresh and lively, and that there is no decay in his Body, and therefore concludes that he shall continue so a long time. Let me tell thee, this may be a fad Omen, which thou interpretest as a good one; for it hath been observed, that the height and top of bodily Health borders on the confines of some Disease, and those who seem most hale, are observed to be suddenly seiz'd upon by some latent Distemper. You say you will Repent before you die, and you have Time enough before you; but how can you reasonably fay so when you can't tell how long ye shall live? Dost thou consider what thou art, a mortal frail Creature, liable to many fatal Accidents every hour 3 hour? Thy Breath may be front the next moment? the thread of thy Life may be cut in funder in an instant. What Folly, what Madness then is it to promise thy self a long abode here? I must tell thee that, when thou talkest of Repenting in Old Age, thou reckonest too fast, thou may'st never reach fo far. Do you not fee that the Young die as well as those of mature Years? When you go from this place, and pass through the Church-Yard, you may observe that the Graves are not all of a length. Death takes its Captives promiscuously; and those of few Years, as well as those of many, are its prey. And as no Age, so no Degree and Quality are exempted, but all are equally liable to its stroke. Besides, Mortality invades us infensibly, Death lies in Ambush for us; unknown Perils and Dangers may be your allotment. How many hast thou seen cut off before thine Eyes in the midst of their days?

Do not flatter thy self then, continually have Death in thy Thoughts, and the Grave in thy Eye; and let these invite thee to a speedy forsaking of thy evil ways. As the Apostle saith of the Sin of Anger, so I may say of all other Sins, Let not the Sun go down on any of them: Repent of them to day, abandon and forsake them presently. Be not so foolish as to defer your Repentance; assure your selves the present Time only is yours; you have no command of Futurity. The \* Epi-

# Martial, Lib. 5. humus, an odd kind of Fellow, who was of this humour, that he still promis'd he would live

to morrow, he would become a new Man a Day hence. But the Poet severely jerks him for it, tell-

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ing him that his t living to morrow may prove too late, and therefore t Seva nimis vita adviseth him to live to day. This is Advice which every Christian

ought to liften to; he must take care that he begin to live now, and that he Repent of his Sins immediately, for he knows not what a day may bring forth. He cannot promise himself Life; how then can he assure himself of Repentance? If this Night his Soul be taken from him, then what will become of his Refolves of Repentance to Morrow? Know this, that many thousands are now in Hell who purposed to Repent afterwards, that is, when they should come to be Sick, or to be Old. The Excuse then which Sinners make is very foolish and absurd, yea, very dangerous and destructive.

But besides this general uncertainty of all Mens Lives, consider yet further the uncertainty of a wicked Man's Life. The Life even of the best hangs but by a small thread, which may easily be cut afunder by innumerable Accidents. But the thread of the ungodly Man's Life is yet liable to greater Hazard, for every Sin he commits is as twere a fatal knife to cut it in pieces. If he turn not (i.e. if he Repent not) God will whet his Sword: He hath bent his Bow, and made it ready, he hath prepared for him the Instruments of Death, as the Pfalmist speaks, Pfal. 7. 13. And concerning such Persons the same Holy Writer saith, They shall not live out half their days, Pfal. 55. 23. And there are divers Instances in Holy Scripture, and in the Experience of the World, to testify this. That Sin is the procurer of Diseases and Death is easily infer'd from what the Apostle saith, I Cor. 11. For this cause many are fick, and weak, and many fleep,

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fleep, i. e. die. God judicially punish'd the Prophanation of the Lord's Supper. I desire you to remember this, especially when you are invited to the Lord's Table. You may by your irreverent approaching to that Ordinance, and by your unworthy demeanour there, provoke God to visit you with Sickness and Mortality. These are the Fruits of this and other Sins. God shortens Mens Lives fometimes)because their Lives are ungodly and prophane. So that indeed a Sinner may thus think and fay with himself, May I not justly expect a fudden and furprizing Blow from the hand of God? How can I fleep fecurely when Judgment hangs over my Head? Have I not forfeited my Life to Divine Justice? How do I know that I shall be reprieved 'till to morrow? Shall I ever open my Eyes in this World again? How can I expect the continuance of Life, when I have so often and so wilfully sinn'd against the God of my Life?

And here likewife I might shew you that there are some Sins which carry Sickness and Mortality in the very commission of them, as Luxury, Excess, Riot, extravagant Lust, Murders, Theft, extraordinary Passion which engenders Strife and Broils. How often do these prove the shortners of Mens Lives? The Sands of the Glass run fast enough of themselves; but many Men by their loofe and diforderly Lives do as it were jog their Glass, and shake the Sands, and then they presently run out. However, Man's Life is intensibly exhausted. How suddenly doth Death surprize the Sinner? He is frequently seized on without any preceding Sickness, to warn him of the approach of Death. If these things be so, what fortishness is it to promise himself long Life, and

to delay his Repentance, because he thinks he shall have Time enough to do this Work?

But Secondly, Suppose that Death gives Warning; suppose Sickness, and Illness, and Indisposition of Body are the Harbingers and Forerunners of Death, yet consider this with your selves, that the Time of Sickness is a bad season to begin to Repent in. What dost thou think thy Condition will be when Diseases arrest thee, and having fastned upon thy Body even attack thy Soul? The Indispositions of the former will have Influence on the latter: this thou must expect to find, Hence it is that the holiest Persons and most resolute Votaries of Religion, have not been able to bear those Disorders and Disquietudes which some Diseases and sharp Distempers bring along with them. They are feen fometimes to run into a kind of Despair and Distraction. How then do you think to bear fuch Distempers when you have laid in no stock of holy Principles, when you are not furnish'd with Graces suitable to such a black and affrighting Condition?

You say you will Repent when you are Sick; but I beseech you consider what you say. Do you understand how unsit a season that will be for Repentance, if it hath been deser'd till then. The strange Indispositions and Disorders of your last and sickly Hours may not suffer you to restect upon your former Life, and to take any Account of your selves and your Actions. You see then how easily your Objection is answer'd, when you plead against a speedy Repentance, and say that you will Repent when you are Sick, when you are leaving the World; then you will set your selves to this great Work. But alas you may be so indisposed that you shall be rendred wholly unable for so

great a Work as Repentance. The Extremity of Pain may so disturb you that you shall not be able to attend to that weighty business. Say not thou wilt Repent when thou art Sick; for thy Mind may then be so shatter'd that thou wilt have enough to do to bear thy Distemper of Body. Or, if an intolerable Pain doth not distract thee, then (which is equally bad) a Stupidity and Dullness may feize upon thee, and wholly difable thee from recollecting the past Actions of thy Life. Some Diseases may make thee sensless, whereby it will be impossible for thee to mind the Concerns of another World, as well as of this. Besides, I might add that the Temptations of Satan are at such a time very strong and impetuous, and even the best Men have experienced this to be true. And thus upon all Accounts the Time of Sickness is not the feason which a Man should choose to begin and finish his Repentance in. Think with thy self if thy best Strength and Health be little enough for the discharge of thy Duty, what will the most favourable Sickness be? Remember that thy Work is to be done whilft thou haft a fit Season; remember that the time of Sickness should be for the farther practife of Repentance, not for the attaining of it. Thy Faith and Repentance should be thy Cordials to chear thy Spirits at such a time, and art thou then destitute of them, and unskill'd how to procure them? In short, Know this that the Repentance of Sick Persons is most commonly fick, faint and languid, and feldom proves advantageous and effectual. Thou then that say'st thou wilt Repent of thy Sins on thy Bed of Sickness, consider these Things which I have fuggested, and take the Advice of the Son of Sirach, (though he be an Apocryphal Author) Humble

Humble thy self before thou be fick, and in the time of

Sins (bew Repentance, Eccl. 18. 21.

But Thirdly, Suppose you are free from Sickness, yet you are to consider the uncertainty of the Means of Grace, whereby true Repentance is wrought in the Soul. If this one Confideration did prevail with you, you would not make use of Excuses to defer your Repentance. You talk of Repenting hereafter, but how do you know that you shall have the Means afforded you to Repent? Read Amos 8. 11, 12. Behold, the days come, faith the Lord, that I will fend a Famine in the Land, not a famine of Bread, nor a thirst for Water, but of hearing the Words of the Lord: And they shall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it. Those who before despised and flighted the Word of the Lord, shall afterwards long for it, crying out, O that we had listed to the Voice of God's Prophets: O that we had attended to their Admonitions and Exhortations; O that we had hearken'd to their Threats and Menaces, and to their Calls and Invitations to Repentance. But now the Prophets. are gone, their Voice is no more heard among us, the joyful Sound is ceas'd; though we wander from place to place, yet the Word of God is not found. I wish heartily this may never be the condition of this Land of our Nativity, or of this Place in particular. But if you continue in your Sins, and will not be prevail'd with to Repent of them, you may justly fear that this will be your portion. Repent therefore now whilst you have the Means and Opportunities of Grace, for you know not how suddenly they may be taken from you. Let every unconverted Person who hears me this

this day fay thus with himself, I have now the liberty of hearing God's Word; it is permitted to me to come into the Assemblies of God's Servants; God's House is open to me; I am weekly told of my Duty; I am frequently exhorted to Repentance. This Lesson hath been often inculcated upon me, particularly it hath been urg'd upon me this day; but I know not whether I shall ever enjoy the like Opportunity again; I may be in my Grave before the next Lord's Day returns; or if I continue in the Land of the Living, I may justly expect that I may be depriv'd of that Word which I have so often heard, and ver so often undervalued and difregarded. Now therefore I will attend to the Voice of Heaven; I will hear what God faith unto me by his Ministers and Embassadors; I will no longer stand out in Rebellion against Heaven; I will turn unto the Lord, and never turn any more to Folly. O that this may be the Language and Behaviour of all that have hitherto been impenitent: Take occafion from this Consideration, viz. that you may be depriv'd of the Means of Grace, to haften your Repentance and turning unto God. I mention'd to you before what Falix faid to St. Paul, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient feafon, I will call for thee. But you do not read that God granted Falix that feafon, or that ever he put it into his Heart to call for that bleffed Preacher. In like manner, if you despise and abuse the Ordinances of Christ Jesus, if you neglect the Means and Offers of Grace, it may be just with God to deny the enjoyment of them to you for the future. Say not then you will Repent, when at the same time you reject the Means of Repentance and Conversion; but Repent speedily, because you are not

not certain that you shall enjoy those Means.

Fourthly, I must tell you of another Uncertainty, and that is of having God's Bleffing to attend on the Means, supposing you do enjoy them. The careless Sinner is apt to say, I doubt not but I shall live and do well; there is Preaching enough, I can't miss of having my Duty taught me; the Church-doors are open, and I can't want Opportunities of being instructed, and receiving Exhortations. But fay that thou livest long, and enjoyest the Opportunities and outward Means of Grace, art thou fure that a Bleffing will accompany them? Tho' God calls upon thee by his Ministers, canst thou be certain that he will call upon thee by his Spirit? Shalt thou hear the inward Voice speaking unto thee? Art thou sure that the Motions, Breathings, Impressions and Excitements of the Holy Ghost will be present with thee? This, this is the main thing thou art to be concern'd for: For alas the Word, without the Efficacy of the Spirit, is a dead thing, and will be of no advantage and profit to thee, yea, rather it will but further thy Guilt and Condemnation. Will you please to peruse but one place in. that Evangelical Prophet Isaiah, Chap. 6. Ver. 9, 10. a place which may well make your Ears to tingle, and your joints to knock one against another: He said, Go and tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and thut their Eyes, lest they Jee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert, and be healed. It is a Text that is quoted fix or seven times in the New Testament, which shews that it is of great weight and moment, and ought to be feri-JUDINO

oully and frequently confider'd by us. For whereas it is thought by the common herd of Men, the rabble of those that call themselves at a venture Christians, that if they can but hear the Word preached to them, if that joyful Sound may but reach their Ears, then their Condition is fafe, they are certainly in the way to Repentance, and to Heaven and Happiness, and they cannot miss of them; whereas Men talk after this rate, you find that those words of God by the Prophet Isaiah confute this Mistake; for he bids him say to that People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not : Tho' the Word of God be preached to you, yet you may have no spiritual understanding or sense of it. See ye indeed, but perceive not: Though you may have fome fight of your Sins, and fome Conviction for them, yet you shall never arrive to a

true Repentance and Conversion.

Be careful then, whenever you feel any Impressions of the Holy Spirit upon your Minds, at the hearing of God's Word, to cherish and foster them, and to entertain them as choice Bleffings. The Word outwardly spoken to the Ear is the Instrument of Conversion, but the Holy Spirit moving on the Heart is the Principal and Efficient Cause. Therefore prize this before that, and improve this Grace of God for the Eternal Welfare of your Souls. If you wilfully neglect to do this, your Case may afterwards be unspeakably dangerous and deplorable. For tho' the Ordinances of God may be still continued to you, yet you may reap no Advantage by them. You may be permitted to hear the Word of God, but you may receive no Benefit by it; for when you have fo long a time abused this Holy Institution, and refused to turn unto God, notwithstanding the frequent

hopes

quent and serious Exhortations of his Ministers, he may justly withdraw the Influence of his Holy Spirit on your Hearts, which alone is able to enlighten your Minds, and to warm and enliven your Affections, and to make the Word preach'd to be profitable to your Souls. And let me freely appeal to your own apprehension of things: Do not some of you who come hither to hear the Word, yet remain unmov'd and unconcern'd at what is deliver'd; or if you be brought to some fuperficial Sense of your Sins, and of your Duty, it presently wears off, and you return to the practise of your former Follies? Now, do you not think that you have justly brought this Judgment upon your own Heads by your wilful refusing the Offers of Grace, and refifting the Holy Spirit, and quenching its Light, and not cherishing his benign Motions? You have relied on the outward Dispensation of the Word, but have not been follicitous to beg the inward Influence of the Spirit.

But there is Hope yet concerning this thing. Whilst the Means of Grace are vouchsafed unto you, I cannot peremptorily say that God hath forsaken you, and that the Holy Spirit is taken from you: But this I say, For the suture take heed; for if you persist in your Obstinacy, and stand out against Heaven, you will in a short time experience the Divine Vengeance. God will wholly withdraw the Insluence of his Grace, and then tho' the usual Means of it be continued, yet they will prove unsuccessful and insignificant; for it is the Spirit only that can render the outward Means essicacious. I beseech you remember this. Mark how it fared with the diseased Lazars that came in crowds to the Pool of Bethesda, with

hopes of being Cured by these fanative and restorative Waters; 'tis said they lay waiting for the moving of them, for an Angel went down at a certain season into the Pool, and troubled the Waters: Who soever then first after the troubling of the Waters step'd in, was made whole of whatsoever Disease he Till the Angel had stir'd the Waters there was no Cure: his moving them made them fana-Thus when the Angel of the Covenant, the Bleffed Jesus, with the Holy Spirit of Grace effecually moves on our Hearts, and scatters his Divine Influence through all the Ordinances and Means, then they will be healing and faving; then all our spiritual Diseases and Maladies shall be cured. On the contrary, all the Means and Institutions of the Gospel will yield you no spiritual Advantage without this inward Operation and Power. Upon this Confideration therefore I request you to hasten your Repentance.

I know some fond and deluded wretches, when they are bid to Repent speedily, alledge that they need not do it, because they have a Principle within them which will help them to Repent, and forsake their Sins, when they please. Every Man hath a Free Will, and if his Will be Free, then Repentance is at his command every minute. It can't therefore be so hard a thing as some Men represent it to be; yea, it is the easiest thing of a

thousand.

Away, away, fond Man, with these gross Delusions. If thou canst Repent when thou pleasest, then tell me what that place of Scripture means, Heb. 12. 17. For one morfel of Meat he fold his Birthright: And afterwards when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of Repentance, tho' he fought it carefully with Tears. The Apostle

Apostle acquaints us here that Esau would have Repented; he made some Offers towards it, yea very great ones; for he sought it with Tears, and that very carefully. This seems to be the plain

sense of the words.

But because some of late interpret these words otherwise, and tell us that this last Clause [he fought it carefully with Tears] refers not to Repentance, but to those words The would have inherited the Bleffing], and so the meaning is, that he fought to retrieve and recover, if it were possible, the Bleffing which he had loft: And because others, who refer the last Clause to Repentance, understand it of Isaac's Repentance; as thus, Esau most earnestly befought his Father to alter his Mind, but could not obtain it : Because there are these different Interpretations of this Text, I will offer the two other following Texts, which are unexceptionable: John 8. 21. Then Said Jesus unto them, I go my way, and ye shall feek me, and shall die in your Sins. The perverted Jews who refused Christ and the Gospel when he preach'd it to them, will afterwards be follicitous and inquisitive; they will be glad to accept of Mercy from that hand which they now fcorn and flight; but flighted Mercy shall be turned into Wrath and Vengeance, and these Scorners shall die and perish in their Infidelity and Impenitency. And that other Text is very terrible, Luke 19. 41. When he was come near the City he beheld it, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy Day, the things which belong to thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. There was a Day, their Day in which they might have accepted of Grace and Pardon offer'd to them, but they wilfully and obstinately neglected it, and therefore it

is in vain to expect now another Day, another tender of Grace and Favour. They have fo long finn'd against Grace and Mercy, that now the Decree is gone forth against them, and the fatal Sentence is irreversible, and can never be recall'd. We cannot affure our felves of fuch Offers again, if we reject these present ones. It will be just with God to substract his Grace and Affistance, and then what becomes of our Resolves of Repenting afterwards? Let it be remember'd then, that only the present Tenders of Grace are ours; or if others should be indulg'd to us, we may not be able to make use of them, such a use as will be really advantageous to us. It is concluded on all hands from the Sacred Writ, that there are certain Terms and Days of Grace. Suppose Life should last (as thou presumest) yet the Day of Spiritual Life and Grace may have a period before the Day of thy Natural Life ends, and so thou may'st be made uncapable of Repenting.

Thus thou feest the Uncertainty of Repenting effectually hereafter, when once thou lav'ft aside the Purpoles of it for the present. I have proved this Uncertainty, by shewing the great Uncertainty of the Things on which our Salvation depends. As thus in brief, thou may'ft be cut off in thy Sins, thy Days may be justly shorten'd; or suppose thy Life is 'lengthen'd out to thee, yet the Means of Grace may be taken from thee, thou may'ft be deprived of them because thou hast abused them. Or say, that these are not denied thee, but thou enjoyest them with great freedom and frequency, yet thou art not fure that thou shalt have a Bleffing accompanying them. From all these Things being put together, thou may'ft see how dangerous it is to defer thy Repentance.

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I proceed now to the Fifth and last Particular, which is this, Not only by the just Judgment of God, but in the very nature of the thing itself it may be impossible to Repent, after thy long Delays. Thy Heart may be so harden'd by thy accustoming thy felf to Sin, that thou may'ft be unable to turn to God, and cast off thy Wickedness. Whilst a Sinner continues his evil Courses without thoughts of Repenting, he loses all fense of Sin, and grows obdurate, and finds it impossible to soften his Heart, and to change his Nature, and to do what before he brag'd of, i. e. to Repent when he pleafed. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good who are accustomed to do evil, Jer. 13. 23. To endeavour to do Good after a long and inveterate Custom of doing Evil, is but washing an Ethiopian; and that in the Common and Proverbial Sense is but Labour in vain. The Reason is, because all the Faculties of a Man's Soul are corrupted by a continuance in Sin; the Understanding is debauched; this Candle of the Lord is almost extinguished; the Will is miserably perverted and distorted, and the Defires and Affections are wholly fet upon Vice. Evil Habits are every day more and more confirm'd in him; Sin reigns and rules in him; the strong Man armed keeps the House, and all things are at his Will. Nor yet doth he fin against his Will, but most willingly, tho' necessarily. This is his deplorable Case. Into such strange Circumstances doth a Man bring himself by continuing in Sin without Repentance. The Difficulty of Repenting hereafter is discern'd in this, That Sin increases every day, and is wonderfully strengthened and fortified; it grows to a Habit, and so becomes strong and domineering; and that

that Liberty and Freedom which naturally is the Prerogative of the elective Faculty of the Soul is quite lost, and an unhappy Necessity is introduc'd in the room of it; as the Apostle intimates concerning those prophane and lewd Hereticks and Seducers, who were like to molest the Quiet of the Christian Church; 2 Pet. 2. 14. Having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot cease from Sin. There is Reason then, you see, to quit the ways of Vice, and that immediately; for otherwise you will never be able to recover your selves. But being past feeling, as the Apostle speaks, you will give your selves over to work all Sin with greediness: You will be led captive by Satan at his Will, and you will not know how to set your selves at Liberty,

when you fee your Captivity and Mifery.

To Day then, if you will hear God's voice, harden not your Hearts, as both the Pfalmist and St. Paul speak. You must hear his Voice, i.e. attend to and believe his Word, repent of your Sins, and obey his Commands: And this Hearing must be to day; that is, we must do it without any procrastination. For if you put off your hearkening to God's Voice, if you delay your Repentance, you take the direct course to harden your Hearts. If you do not hear this Voice to day, you may be harden'd to morrow: And then remember Pharaoh's Cafe; once being harden'd, he could not return and recover himself, notwithstanding all the Plagues which were fent; yea, these did but harden him yet more. O consider this, all ye that accustom your selves to your Sins, and will not be perswaded to relinquish them. Consider that it is exceeding difficult for an old Sinner, who hath harden'd himself in his Wickedness, to abandon his vicious ways, and to Repent heartily of his mifdoings.

doings. It is not with Sin as with some other things, which, the older they grow, are the weaker and more unable: No; Sin grows stronger by its age, and as that increaseth in strength, so we become weaker and more unable to resist it. Every Act intends the Habit, and that Habit is as hard to extirpate as the very Laws of Nature are to be cancell'd. Is there not great Reason then that you should leave your Sins, and forthwith Repent? For if you perform not this Task speedily, you will miserably lie under the Power of Sin, and it will be next to an impossibility to free your felves from it. The Growth of Vice, and the Temptations of the Evil Spirit, 'will make it too hard for you. How will you be able to root out those wicked Habits which have had so fast and deep residence in your Souls? How shall the Diabolick Spirit be cast out after he hath possess'd you fo long a time?

Think of these Things with great seriousness: Yea, think of this, that you are not fure that, if you wilfully defer your Repentance, you shall have any desire to Repent hereafter. By desire I mean a real, hearty, and well-grounded Desire; for otherwife I know the vilest and wickedest Wretches have had some faint and languid Wishes of Repentance; but a hearty, fincere and unforced Defire of it is very rare. Did not that noted Italian Lawyer profess that he could not so much as defire to Repent, when he was invited and urged to it by the standers by? Have you not heard of that Person who cried out when he was leaving the World, I have denied my Master with Peter, but I can't repent with St. Peter? You deceive your felves if you think you can defire to Repent at all times. As you can't command Time (as I told

you before) so neither can you command Repenrance. But be it known to you, that continuing in Sin is the ready way to final Impenitency, to a State unpardonable, to a Condition past recovery. The Man that hath remain'd a confiderable time in his Sins without Remorfe and Repentance feems to be a refembling Instance with that of Lazarus, who had been in the Grave, the Bed of Corruption and Rottenness, four Days, so that it was concluded he stank by that time; yea, the Sinner hath lay'n a longer time in the Grave, many Years hath he been dead in Sin: Here therefore, as in the raising of Lazarus, there must be something more than ordinary. Christ greated in Spirit and was troubled; he wept, and he cried with a loud voice: All these are particularly mention'd by the Evangelist. So the Sinner that hath been long dead is very hardly rais'd to Life. There is unspeakable Difficulty in returning to God after a long and repeated course of Wickedness. Many find this true by sad Experience.

Therefore turn unto God betimes, before you have contracted evil Habits, before you have fet your felves into a fixed course of sinning, before you become obdurate and sensles. Repent now whilst there is hope of recovering, whilst the Wound is not grown incurable. For afterwards it may be too late, and to no purpose to think to heal it. Sin when it is once grown chronical and inveterate is hard to be cured. Hasten we then to the Spiritual Physician, ask we after an Essectual Medicine and Remedy, and let us speedily make use of it. Let us be convinced of this, that Delays and Demurs cannot possibly be any where so dangerous and pernicious to us as in this affair. Let this be fixed on your Minds, that the longer

you

you put off your Repentance, the more unfit you will be to do that great Office. Our Sins are call'd Debts: By your repeated acts of Sin you increase your Debts, and you run so fast in Arrears that you will fink under them, and grow desperate. You are concern'd therefore to break off your Sins by Repentance, to give your felves up wholly to the Service of God, and to amend your Lives. And this must be done forthwith, lest Sin increafing, your Power decrease, and you be render'd uncapable of turning from your evil ways; for if you accustom your selves to Sin, you may at last be unable to leave it.

Do I not speak a Truth as plain and as visible as the Sun at Noon-day? Do you not fee, do you not experience daily, that it is very hard to mafter a long Custom, to destroy an evil Habit which hath got root in you? With what Difficulty is a Habit of Swearing and Curfing laid afide? How hardly is a long Custom of Drunkenness and Debauchery removed? When a Man hath used himfelf to Lying, he finds it a Work almost impossible to break himself of it. And if it be so hard and uneasy to resist one single Vice, how hard will it be to extirpate a whole heap and amassment of Vices, after we have continued Ten or Twenty Years in the commission of them? Will the Remedy and Redress be easier and pleasanter then, think you? Ponder this throughly in your most ferious Thoughts, that the longer you continue in Sin, the more difficult it will be to Repent of it. For Custom will grow into Nature, and then though you use all the Ways and Arts imaginable, you will not be able to help your felves, and to change your Temper.

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Set about this Work then with all haste, whilst there is hope of being successful in this Task. Do not by Impenitency and Hardness of Heart treasure up to your selves Wrath against the Day of Wrath. Think not to commit Sin after Sin, and to persist in the way of Wickedness, and then, when you have even wearied your selves, to sit down, and to be forry for what you have done, and to call this Repentance, and to imagine that this will suffice for your Eternal Salvation: Or, to speak in the words of an Ancient Pious Fa-

\* 'Oeg μώ τότε σοι ἐπίλθη η μεταγνωσις ότε μόνη πάξεςτν η λπόγνωσις. Indor. Pelui. Ερίβ. 1. Vol.

ther, \* Let not Repentance come into your Thoughts then, when there is place only for Despair. Flatter not your

felves, I beseech you, perswade not your selves that after a wilful and obstinate persisting in Sin you may command the Favour of Heaven, and have it at what time you please. Know assuredly, that this late Repentance of yours, which you design in Old Age, or on a Bed of Sickness, or at the approach of Death, know assuredly that this Repentance will be unprofitable to you.

And if you would further know the Reasons of this, take them in these three Particulars: 1. Such a Repentance argues a base and disingenuous Spirit. 2. It is by Force and Compulsion. 3. It is in it self impersed and desective. For these three Reasons your late Repentance will not be accept-

ed of God.

First, I say, it argues an ungrateful and base Spirit: For if we by all means would have God to hear us speedily, to make no tarrying, and to haste to help us, as the Psalmist often prays, do we not act disingenuously and unworthily when we make

no haste to obey God's Voice calling us to Repentance? And may not he justly refuse our late Addreffes to him, and laugh at us instead of hearing us? As we read in Prov. 1. 24. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no Man regarded, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, &c. to the end of the Chapter. This vile Carriage shall deservedly be punish'd. If we refuse to hear God speaking to us in our time of Health and Strength, he may justly refuse to attend to us when we cry unto him in time of Sickness or Old Age. Our unworthy Benaviour can't be more fitly requited. The Sinner indulges himself in all manner of Vice, and gratifies the Devil and his own Lusts a long time, and then in the close of his Life he makes a shew of Repentance and turning unto God: but what can be more vile and base than this? Shall Satan have the first Fruits, and very flower of his Years. and must the Great Jehovah be presented with the wither'd Leavings and Fragments? St. Austin faith well, \* If you will needs

Repent then when you cannot sin \* De Panitentia.

any more, your Sins leave you,

and not you them. And can this be acceptable to God? When the Fire of Lust is quite burnt out and spent, is that your only Time to wallow in the Dust and Ashes of Repentance? God will not be thus mocked.

Secondly, Late Repentance will not avail, because it may be thought to be necessitated and forced. The Sinner sees that the Judgments of God attend him, that his Days are drawing towards an end, that he must dye and leave this World, and appear in another which he knows will be very terrible to him; yea, he begins to feel the Flames

Flames of Hell, and perceive how hot they are; he can't live any longer and do as he hath done; and now being befet with Dangers he is compell'd to confess his Sins, and tell sad Stories of his Life. But all his Repentance which proceeds from such a Cause as this, is far from being acceptable, for it is not genuine and true, but is extorted and wrested from him. It being a violent Action it is not so much as Moral; for every Action of this kind proceeds from a free Choice. So that late Repentance, being unvoluntary and forced, is not properly Repentance.

I might here upon this Occasion remind you of the severe Discipline of the Primitive Churches, who (as the Writings of the Fathers acquaint you) denied Absolution to those scandalous Sinners who requested it on their Death-beds, because they deferr'd their Repentance till then. They thought that the Repentance which was so late could hardly be true and sincere, it being extorted from them

\* Rogare illos non delicti panitentia, fed mortis urgentis admonitio compellit. through Fear of Death. \* It was not, faith Cyprian, a true Remorfe and Repentance for their Sins which made them defire the Minister's Affistance

at that time, but it was only an apprehension of approaching Death which compell'd him to it. And in after-times when this rigorous Discipline was abated in the Church, and when Absolution was given to the Moribundi (as they then seem'd to be), yet if they were restor'd to Health, they publickly made Confession of their Sins, as appears

† Greg. Nyssen. Greg. Naz. || Concil. Carthag. 4. Concil. Arausican. 1. out of some of the † Fathers and || Councils. This I alledge to this purpose, to let you know what Thoughts they formerly

had of a late and Death-bed Repentance; they would not be perswaded that Mercy and Reconciliation could be obtain'd after a long persisting in Sin.

But though in the rigour of that Opinion they were misled, yet so far it is true, that there is great Danger in deferring Repentance, and generally fuch Persons as are so presumptuous are excluded from Mercy and Forgiveness. For late Repentance is most commonly feign'd and hypocritical, it being extorted by Fear of Death and Hell. It proceeds from Self-love, and not from a Hatred of Sin, and therefore is not available: Whereas true Repentance must be free and voluntary, and no ways compell'd. For as 'tis the Nature and Essence of Religion to be a voluntary devoting of our felves to God, fo this is requifite in that great part of Religion. Many wicked Men have confess'd their Sins, and been troubled for them, but something forced them to it. Their present Miseries, or the foresight of future ones, wrung Tears from their Eyes. They have observed that their Case is sad and lamentable, and if they should leave the World, their Condition would be unspeakably miserable, and hereupon they grieve and mourn, and make some shews of Repentance. And truly we have reason to believe that they are but Shews for the most part; for we fee that 'tis a very small number of those who make Vows upon a Sick-bed, and feem to dislike their former ways, that act according to those Vows, when they are restored to Health. We feldom observe that their good Purposes and Promises are call'd to mind afterwards, and produce a Change in their Lives, but they generally return to their former Follies. Which shews that late Repentance was not a Free-will Offering, but

was forced and extorted.

Thirdly and lastly, Late Repentance is usually defective and imperfect, and therefore proves unprofitable. Alas, what do a few faint Wishes fignify? What are some little Attempts and Essays of a Holy Life? What is a superficial Sorrow? These are not the Things which constitute Holiness; but doing the Will of our Father which is in Heaven, that is it. We must live piously, justly, and foberly. The New Creature must be entire and compleat in all its parts. And can this be done in the last and weakest part of a Man's Life? Is it probable that our Endeavours and Addresses will be accepted which are by our own default fo imperfect and deficient? Is not God to be serv'd with all our Strength and Might, with the greateft intension and vigour of our Faculties, in the feveral tracks and paths of Duties and Graces, which are very large and extensive? Now, defer'd Repentance must needs be lame and defective because it falls short of these Things. Let me ask you, Do you think to do Penance in your Deathbed Sheets? Will those weak and languishing, and last Efforts of gasping Devotion serve your turn? Dost thou think at last to consecrate thy Soul as 'twere with those five words, Lord, have Mercy upon me, and so forthwith to be transubstantiated into a Saint, and be taken to Heaven? Yea, Repentance is not the Work of an Hour, or of a Day, or of a Week. Take it in its full extent, and it is a Change of the whole Man, a new Course of Life. It is not a bare transient Act or Thought, but it is a walking after the Spirit, a doing the Commandments of God, a keeping a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man.

Doth not this require some Time? And if it doth, why then do you put it off? Can all this be transacted suddenly? Can it be done by a dying Man? Can the former Habits of Sin be cast off in so short a time? Surely you cannot believe any fuch thing; and if you do not, what Reafon have you to act as you do? As I have already shew'd you, that the Righteous God may judicially harden a Sinner's Heart, and then he shall not be capable of Repenting: fo likewife the Time of Repenting may be expir'd by his own fault; he may defer and protract his turning to God, and by that means (being over-taken by Sickness and Death) he may not have so much Time as is necessary for a true and entire Repentance. Good Purpofes at best must be look'd upon but as the Beginning of Vertue and a Holy Life. To purpose to be holy is not to be so indeed, and differs hugely from it. Until the Vows and Resolutions are produced into Act, we cannot be faid to be true Penitents and reformed Perfons; for actual Holiness is required of us.

I do not deny but that fometimes the Intention of doing good and living well may be, and is accepted of God for the actual Performance; but then this Intention must be so throughly sincere, that it would certainly (if there were a possibility and opportunity of actuating it) prove essectual and operative. Now, none can know this but by the Event: we can't conclude in behalf of our selves or others from any Promises, or Intentions expressed (in Sickness or at Death) of living a Holy Life for the suture, that they would certainly be essectual, that is, that what was intended would be actually performed. But this we see, that very sew perform the Promises which they

made

made in their Sickness. And this we know also, that our Promises and Resolves (that they may be advantageous to us) must not proceed from the mere Fear of Death and Damnation; they must not be forced and extorted (as I have faid before). And this moreover we know, that generally Death-bed Repentance is imperfect in itself, is miferably short and deficient, and so happens to be of no Advantage. The Sinner, when he hath defer'd Repentance so long, is not able to go through the whole Work. If he puts it off till the time of Sickness or Old Age, or the approach of Death, he will scarcely have Time enough to finish the Task which is so great. Death-bed Repentance is diffurb'd and discompos'd, and (as I faid before) fickly and dying, as well as the Sinner. The short is, A late and Death-bed Repentance is against the whole Design of Christ and the Gospel-Institution; for this, you know, requires actual and compleat Righteousness, living in the constant Exercise of Grace, and adorning Religion by a holy and exemplary Conversation.

And thus you see, the great Hazard and Danger which accompany a late Repentance: You see upon all accounts the inessectualness and invalidity of turning unto God in the Extremity of Mens Lives. The Lord six upon your Spirits so important and weighty a Truth; the Lord so insluence upon your Hearts and Lives that you may not be of the number of those vain and inconsiderate Men whom I have been speaking of, whose Folly can't sufficiently be express'd, tho' we should suppose that God will, in his infinite Mercy, give them Repentance unto Life; for how unwise are they to put themselves upon such an unspeakable Trouble as they must certainly undergo? They

must undo what they have done; they must call themselves Fools and Sots, weak and shallow Creatures, without Sense and Understanding, and they must entertain quite other Thoughts than they did before: They must ask Forgiveness with Sighs and Groans; they must feel unspeakable Grief and Anguish of Soul; and the longer they continue in their Sins, the greater will all thele be; their Pains and Dolours will be increased, and they shall pay dear for all their past Follies. All this proclaims aloud to us, that to Repent betimes is the fafest and wisest course; for hereby many Sins are prevented, many Enormities in our Lives are avoided, and many Troubles and Anguishes of Soul, many black and doleful Hours are escaped. Wherefore it must needs be a Folly and Madness to defer Repentance, which is a Bufiness that requires Dispatch, and to which all other Affairs must give way.

There is One Objection yet behind, which I think it will be worth our Time to confider and fully Answer. When some Persons are exhorted to Repent forthwith, and to abandon their Sins with all speed, they are apt to reply thus; Notwithstanding all that you have faid concerning the Danger of delaying Repentance, we have one Refuge to fly to at last, and that is the Example of the good Thief, of whom we read in the 23d of Luke, from the 39th to the 44th Verse: The words are these; One of the Malefactors which were hang'd, rail'd on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thy self and us: But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remem-

ber me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradife. Hence it is clear, fay they, that this Penitent Thief was faved at the last Hour. Why may not we then defer our Repentance, and with good Hopes too, viz. that we shall share in the like Felicity with this notable Penitent, that our latter End shall be as happy as his? Besides, he was a notorious Wretch, a Robber, a Highway-man, and perhaps a Murderer (as those of that Trade often are); and yet he found Mercy even on the Cross; after a lewd Life he made a most blessed End, and went to Paradise the same Day with the Saviour of the World. And why may not we expect the same Favour? To what purpose is this Example mentioned in Sacred Hiflory, but that we might be encourag'd and comforted by it? If this Man, no petty Larcon or Pilferer, but a notorious Robber, was indulg'd this Favour and Kindness, what Reason is there that others should not promise themselves the like? And therefore there is no great Danger in deferring our Repentance. We may hope to find Mercy at the last Hour as well as the Thief on the Cross.

I Answer in general, That it is true the same God who had Mercy on that notorious Offender, and saved him at his last Hour, can likewise save all those that truly, sincerely and heartily turn unto him even on the very point of their going out of the World. But I have shew'd you how difficult it is, yea, how near it is to an impossibility to do so after a wicked and prophane Life. Therefore you must not flatter your selves, and fondly presume on Mercy, because of the bare possibility of the thing in some Circumstances.

But

But more particularly I Answer, That those who alledge this Example of the Thief do misunderstand and misapply it, and thereby deceive themfelves. Here then I will let you see, that this is nothing to their purpose, and that they cannot with any shew of Reason make use of it to excuse their deferring their Repentance. Some by way of Answer say, That we do not certainly know whether this Thief's Conversion commenced on that Day of Christ's Passion. It may be he had been wrought upon before by what he had feen or heard of Christ and his Apostles; it may be he had some time before Repented of his Sins; and this perhaps was only the first occasion of discovering his Repentance publickly. There is fome Ground for this, viz. because he so readily mention'd the Kingdom of Christ, as if he had been before acquainted with that Stile, and instructed in that Doctrine. This is not altogether improbable, and then this Example will not serve the turn of the Objectors, who make use of it to defend their delaying of their Repentance: For if the Thief's Conversion and Repentance was no sudden Business, if it were a considerable time before his going out of the World, they cannot make it subservient to the favouring of a Death-bed Repentance.

But I will suppose or grant, that this was the first time of his Conversion, and so I offer these sollowing Things to their ferious Confideration: 1. Whereas they alledge the Example of the Thief on the Cross, let them remember that there was another Thief at the same time who was not Converted, and did not Repent. 2. Think of this, that the Repentance of the Thief on the Cross at his last Hour, is but a fingle Example, and there is

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not such another in all the Sacred Records. 3. The Thief's Conversion was an extraordinary Case, and is to be look'd upon as an Act of unusual Favour from God. 4. It was peculiar and unparallel in all the Circumstances of it. 5. It is not improbable that the Thief had all along sin'd out of Ignorance, which is not thy Case. 6. The Thief on the Cross had not that space of Time (after Christ was made known to him) which thou hast vouchsafed to thee, to shew all Acts of Repentance in. 7ly and lastly, This Penitent did what he could do in that Time which he had, and that was more than thou, who pleadest this Instance,

hast vet done.

1. You are to remember this, that there was a Thief at the same time who was not Converted, who did not Repent. See the 39th ver. One of the Malefactors which were hang'd, rail'd on him; he wickedly and blasphemously reproached Christ; he shewed no Signs of Repentance; he continued still in his Impenitency; as he lived so he expired. He had harden'd himself by an accustom'd finning, and the Habit of Vice could not be foon extirpated: he persisted in his Villany notwithstanding the Example of this Convert before his The good Thief, his Companion, could not prevail with him to alter his Thoughts, and to discern his Danger, and to acknowledge his Fault; tho' he heard his pious Admonitions and Instructions, yet he was not reclaimed. Whosoever thou art then that relieft on this Instance, be fo just and equal as to view the Example of the Impenitent and Harden'd Thief, as well as of the Converted one. One shall be taken, and another left: Here it may be applied, and it is too true. One Thief was taken up to Heaven, but the other was left

left as an obdurate Reprobate to be sentenced to Hell. Look on this latter as well as the former; consider the deplorable state of this wretched Man, as well as the happy Condition of the other, who expired on the Cross at the very same time. Whenever you mention the one, think also of the other, and think of all those miserable Wretches who have put off their Repentance, and continued in a course of Wickedness, and at last left the World in the same manner that they liv'd in it, that is, without Repentance, and any sense

of their evil ways.

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There were of old shew'd unto a Person in Neptune's Temple several Images and Altars, and other Remembrances fet up by those who had efcap'd the danger of Shipwreck, and had got fafe to shore after all their Tempests at Sea; and he was defired to view them well, and to observe how propitious a Deity the God Neptune was: But the same Person replied after this manner; Here you shew me some few Remembrances of those who have escaped from the Perils of the Sea, but what vast numbers are there that have perished in the Waves, and could never come hither to erect any Statue or Altar? In like manner, when thou feest a few late Penitents, and particularly this Thief rescued by the infinite Mercy of Heaven, and made the Monument of God's Clemency and Favour, do not thou thereupon grow presumptuous, but, to prevent that, look upon the innumerable Companies of Men and Women who have utterly perished in their Sins, and by their perfifting in them to the end have been excluded from all Mercy and Favour. Be not partial, but view these dreadful Examples, and be terrified by them. Think of the Impenitent Thief, and dare K 3

not to delay thy Repentance, lest thou be snatch'd away as suddenly as he was, tho' not in the same kind.

2. In Answer to the fore-named Objection I am to tell you, that the Repentance of the Thief at his last Hour is but a fingle Example, and you can't shew me such another. There is not one Instance more of the like in all the Sacred Records, in the whole Book of God. Now, every smatterer in Logick knows that it is but Sophistry to argue and infer, and make a General Rule from an Individual or Particular Act. Have not thoufands perished that delayed their Repentance? Art thou not convinced that ten thousand, yea numberless Souls, have been undone by this Folly? And is not this a greater, stronger, and more forcible Argument that thou shouldst not defer thy Repentance, than the other is that thou shouldst? Because one or a few have had a Pardon brought them when they were at the place of Execution, and were about to take their fatal swing, shall every vile Malefactor and Miscreant look for the like Favour, and depend upon it? I trow not. The Reasoning ought to be the same here in the Case I am now treating of. One Man I read of in Holy Writ that was thrown over-board in a great Storm, and a Whale fwallow'd him, and lodg'd him fafely in the spacious Cavities of her Belly, and when he had been there some time, she fairly disgorg'd him on the dry shore. Have I therefore any reason to cast my self over-board, supposing I were at Sea, and to commit my Body to the raging Ocean, with Hopes to have a merciful Fish to be my Deliverer? There is no rational expecting of any fuch thing. I have read of another Man that was toss'd out of the Ship wherein

wherein he was failing, by the force of a boifterous Wave, but a more benign and kind one took him up, and flung him into that or another Ship. But would you not count that Man mad, who would throw himself into the Sea in Hopes of meeting with fuch a favourable Billow? I have been told of one, and a second perhaps, that venturing into the deeper parts of a River, beyond his depth, and though he could not help himself with fwimming, yet by fome happy Accident was faved: Shall I therefore venture after the same manner in Hopes of escaping by the same means? All Men would cry out of my Folly and mad Rashness. I have been told of one Man that went over a very narrow Bridge, so narrow indeed and so hazardous in the passage, that the Noon-day Light would have been little enough to direct him; but he pass'd it, and in the darkest season of Night got over fafe, and reach'd his Journeys end foon after. Must I therefore put off my return home till Night, and trust to a dangerous passage in the dark, because one Man had no Hurt by such an Adventure?

Are not all these absurd Consequences and most irrational Conclusions, and who is there among you that lives and acts by them, and thinks it sitting to put them in practise? Now, I declare this to you, you may with as much reason expect that these Instances should prove effectual to you, and be made good every day of your Lives, as that of the Penitent Thies on the Cross. And therefore do not deceive your selves, and fondly imagine that this Example is any thing to your purpose. Let me tell thee, a single particular Instance is not to be drawn into general Practice. In reference to this Example of the Thies on the R 4

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Cross, I may truly say to thee as Christ said to Peter, (when he was prying into the Horoscope of the Beloved Disciple) What is that to thee? It is not to thy Case; it hath no relation to thee at all. Thou are not to conduct and order thy Life by one single and strange Act which thou takest notice of. There are some unusual and Monadical Acts (as my Lord Bacon calls the like in Philosophy) which are of that nature, that in the common course of Life we are not to expect them, or rely upon them. Such is this of the Thies's Conversion; it is peculiar and extraordinary, and it may be there will never be the like again. Therefore never mention this Instance any more, I mean to this purpose, to incourage thee in thy

Sins; and in delaying thy Repentance.

3. The Thief's Conversion at that time, namely, at his very Exit out of the World, is to be recounted as an Act of Grace and Favour proper to that feason, and so thy Case will not be concern'd here, and therefore thou dost ill in applying this Instance to thy felf. It hath been a Custom among Kings on the Days of their folemn Triumphs, or at their first Entrance to their Sovereignty (that they may give a Specimen of their future Clemency and Kindness to their People) to command the Prison-doors to be open'd, to proclaim Pardon to Criminals, to forgive Offenders, and frankly to publish Acts of Oblivion respecting their former Crimes. But then this fingular Distribution of Mercy may not happen again throughout the Prince's whole Reign, and therefore the People must not expect such Acts of Favour as often as they offend; and indeed it were extreme Folly in them to promise themselves any such thing. Christ Jesus the Lord of Life and Glory, the King

of Kings, when he was going triumphantly to Heaven, (for he even triumph'd on the Cross) when he was taking Possession of the Heavenly Kingdom, the Paradise of the Blessed, he vouchfafed to shew this fingular Mark of Royal Favour, namely, in the Conversion of the Thief. He let the World know that Pardon and Forgiveness were at his disposing, and that he deign'd to beflow this Kindness where it could not be expected. This King can pardon what Offenders he pleases, and he can do it when he thinks fit. Both these Sovereign Acts were declar'd and proclaim'd aloud at that time when our Saviour was on the Cross, and entring into his Kingdom. He heard the Petition of the Malefactor when he pray'd, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom, and by a fingular Act of Divine Mercy and Power made him fit to inherit Eternal Light in the Kingdom of Glory.

Again, This Act of our Saviour towards the Thief hanging on the Cross was proper to that seafon, as it was purposely designed to demonstrate the Vertue and Efficacy of his Sufferings. [There was a special Reason why Christ would have the Thief to be call'd then, (even at the last Hour) that whilst Christ was suffering he might shew forth the Vertue of his Passion; that all which saw the one, might also acknowledge the other.] These are Mr. Perkins his words, in his Treatile of the right way of Dying well. That Act of Christ was to manifest what the Merit of his Death and Passion could procure, even Pardon and Remission of Sins at the very last gasp. So that you are to look upon it as a Miracle in some sort; however, it was a great and wonderful Act whereby Christ was pleased to honour the Reproach and Ignominy of the Cross at that time. And therefore you will find upon serious Consideration, that this Example of the Penitent Thief doth not reach you. It is a singular and extraordinary thing, and consequently you act unwisely and fondly when you make use of it in an ordinary Case. You have no ground to expect such miraculous and strange Transactions; it is Presumption and Folly to de-

pend upon them.

4. The Repentance of the expiring Thief upon the Cross was peculiar and unparallel in the Circumstances of it, and so likewise it is nothing to the purpose of those who alledge it in favour of late Repentance. For first, remember this high Act was done by the Ministry of Christ in his own Perfon; and this alters the Case much, and makes it not of Consequence in the Dispensation which we are now under. You have no Instance to produce of any of Christ's Ministers, though Apostles, that did so much; and therefore expect not the like of the ordinary Dispensers of the Gospel at this day. Think not to be called and converted by these in the same manner. Again, This notable and extraordinary Act was done before the Enemies, the implacable Persecutors and bloody Executioners of the Lamb of God, and with a Defign which was to take effect at that particular Time, which will not happen at another. Christ did this in the view of his Adversaries, to shew the Power of his Deity even then shining through the Obscurities and Disgraces of the Cross. He did it then that they might be convinced of his Divine Power, that they might fee he was able to turn the Heart of a prophane dissolute Wretch, and to make him his Disciple at the very Point of Death. Yea, he thus reclaim'd this vile Sinner at that

very Time to upbraid their Infidelity and Stubbornnefs, and to let them see what they ought to do by
his Example, but what they would never have a
Heart to perform, and therefore should be eternally miserable. Weigh these unusual Circumstances,
and then you will see, that your Condition is not
parallel with this of the Converted Thief, and
consequently that you have no Reason to make
use of it as an Excuse for deferring your Repentance.

5. We suppose at present that the Thief did not know any thing of Christ before this very Time of his Execution and Crucifixion, and therefore his former finning was out of Ignorance, and for that reason he found Mercy, as St. Paul afterwards did, because he did it ignorantly. Thou canst not prove that the Thief did willingly put off the Time of his Conversion, or that he did knowingly refuse the Great and Only Redeemer Christ Jesus, and that he did presumptuously and desperately defer his Repentance till the last Hour of his Life; and therefore thy Case and his are not alike. If this Man had before that Time attained to the Knowledge of the true Religion, and the Author of it, perhaps he would have appeared in another posture in the World, and not have committed Crimes fo vile and scandalous. I may fay of him with allusion to our Saviour's words, If the mighty Works had been done before him which have been so often in thy fight, if the Miracles and Wonders of Christianity had been set before him, as they have been so long a time before thee, it is likely he would have Repented in Dust and Ashes. Examine then the great difference which is between his Case and thine, and then thou canst not plead this Example of the Thief. Thou art

one that dost acknowledge Christ, and hast always done fo, thou professest thy Belief in the Gospel, thou ownest thy Religion to be good and holy, thou art admitted into the Christian Church, and approvest of the Laws of the Blessed Jesus, though thou dost not practife them; thou art called to Repentance by the Ministers of the Gospel, thou hast thy Duty frequently inculcated upon thee, and thou hast constant Monitors to remind thee of the Danger of neglecting it. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man, if thou dost not immediately imbrace the Offers of Mercy in Christ Jefus. But who can tell whether the Thief had any of these Things vouchsafed to him; who knows whether he had any Opportunities and Means of acquiring the knowledge of his Duty? In brief, We grant that the Thief was Converted at his going out of the World, but then we must remember that it was as foon as he was call'd: he complied with the first Offers of Grace: and this renders thy Condition and his very different. It is certain, that this is not the Case of those Persons who alledge the late and fudden Conversion of the Thief on the Cross.

dedging and professing of Christ, to correct and change his course of Life: He having been (as it is supposed) a stranger to Christianity all his Life before, he had but this short space of Time allotted him to reslect on what was past, and to recollect his Thoughts before he went out of the World. But thou who makest use of this Example, viz. to justify or excuse thy persisting in Sin without Repentance, hast Time enough to reform thy vicious Life, and to frame thy ways according to Christ's Laws; thou hast all the Means and

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Opportunities of Grace allowed thee, and there is nothing wanting to promote thy Salvation and Happiness. How then canst thou imagine that this Example will be any ways serviceable to thy purpose? For shame make use of it no more; thy Case and the Penitent Thies's are no ways alike

7ly and lastly, That Thief on the Cross, whom thou so boldly alledgest, was another kind of Person than thou takest him to be; for he did a great deal, yea, as much as could be done in that Time which he had; which thou can't not with any Truth fay of thy felf. If you confult the place which I read to you before, you'll find it to be so. First, he reproved his Fellow-thief, he chid and reprehended him for his bold Blasphemy, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? It was no small indication of a changed Mind, that he had the Boldness to rebuke his Fellow-sufferer and Fellow-sinner. And as he rebuked his Companion, so he condemned both himself and him together: We indeed justly suffer (faith he), for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds. Which argueth that he was content with his Punishment, and that he acknowledged the Justice of God and Man in it, which truly is a thing that is not common; for those that die in that Character, namely, as Malefactors, generally go out of the World obstinate and harden'd, and are feldom induced to confess the Faults and Crimes for which they fuffer. If you read the next words, you will observe how this Penitent afferted the Innocency of Jesus, This Man hath done nothing amiss. In these few words he made an open Confession, a publick Acknowledgment of Christ, and that in very strange Circumstances

of Time, even when his Fellow-sufferer reviled Christ, and when the Jews, who stood near the Cross and look'd on, scorn'd and vilify'd him, nay, even when his own Apostles and Disciples forfook him. When these Things were thus, then did the Good Thief own and profess the Bleffed Iesus. To his Profession he added Prayer, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom; and to all these he added Faith, for both his Acknowledgment and his Prayer are undeniable Arguments that he believed in Christ and trusted in him, yea, that this Trust was very strong, lively and heroick. So that hence it appears, this Penitent Thief did all that was to be done, or could be done in that Time which was allotted him.

And now lay all these Things together, and tell me whether late Repentants use to do this; or rather, plainly fay, they fall short of all this. And therefore the Case of the Thief on the Cross cannot be an Incouragement to Security and delaying of Repentance. Therefore do not promife thy felf that Happiness which he attain'd to. I will fay no more of this Objection, or of the other Particulars which have reference to a late Repentance, because these and the like Heads are most devoutly (and indeed most elegantly and pathetically) urged in the Practical Pieces of a known and Reverend \* Writer of our

\* Bishop Taylor. Church; one who by his excellent Pen hath abundantly endeavoured to convince the World of this great Proposition, That a Death-bed Repentance is vain and unferviceable. Befides, this is a Subject which hath been frequently discuss'd by other Writers. I wish it were as duly confider'd, and laid to Heart. That it may be fo, I will conclude this Point with

with a Word or two of ferious Application.

1. From what hath been deliver'd on this Subject we may infer, That the Doctrine and Practice of fuch Men are to be reprehended who encourage Men to put off their Repentance, and to make Delays in so important a Matter as that is. And here I can't but take notice of that licentious and prophane Doctrine of the Church of Rome, at least of the greatest Doctors in that Church, who confidently affert, that 'tis not a Duty incumbent upon us to Repent of our Sins as foon as we have committed them; if it be done before Death, or at the point of it, it is sufficient. Others of them tell us, that 'tis enough if we confess our Sins once a Year, that is, against Easter, or some other solemn time. And then too the same Doctors hold, that a fingle Act of Contrition at the last Hour, is fufficient to atone for the repeated Sins of a long Life. But I took notice of this dangerous Doctrine before, and then observed, that there are more Papists in the World than those who profess themselves to be of the Church of Rome: For how common is it to give our felves liberty to Repent when we think good, and to think it sufficient if we do it at last? How many are there that give themselves indulgence in Sin, and venture as far as they think they can possibly with safety? They are loth to torment themselves before the time. before the just punctual moment beyond which it is dangerous to go.

2. See the egregious Folly and Danger of delaying your Repentance. How fad is it to confider the deplorable State of Mankind in the World? How many do we see snatched away by God's Judgments, by fatal Accidents and Casualties? Oftentimes they are taken away whilst they are thinking

thinking of fuch a thing as Repentance; whilft they are in the very Thoughts of changing their Lives, their Life indeed is chang'd in another fense, they change this mortal for an immortal State. Or, if Men still live, and arrive to Old Age, yet do we not fee that they go on in the practice of the same Sins, and they are no more amended than before? Do you not observe, that many of them die fensless and stupid; that is, they are not concern'd at all for their past Offences, or the Future State they are going into? Some when they come to leave the World, conclude it too late to Repent, and so die desperately, and give over all Hopes of faring well hereafter. Others are presumptuous, and even claim Heaven after a most wicked and ungodly Life. Some are perswaded that the Soul is mortal, and expires with the Body, and confequently they fall into the Grave like Brutes, and their Death is but a Copy of their Lives. Thus the Devil hath perverted the greatest numbers of Mankind, that he may make them his Prey, and at last triumph in their utter Destruction.

That you may not be thus missed and ruined is the Defign of this plain Discourse. I beseech you be apprehensive of the Delusions which so many lie under, and understand your selves aright, and confult your Eternal Welfare. You have immortal and never-dying Souls; and you may preserve them from Ruine, and secure their Happiness if you please. If you will imbrace the present Offers of Grace and Mercy, and Repent of your Sins without any further delay, you take the course to prevent all the Devil's Designs against you, and to affure your felves of Salvation and Happiness. But if you refuse the Tenders of Grace, and

and wilfully defer your Repentance, God may then justly shorten your Days, and deprive you of an Opportunity of Repenting. Or, if your Days be prolonged, God may refuse to accept of you in your Old Age, after you have spent your Youth, and the best part of your Life, in satisfying your Lusts, and serving the Devil, the professed Adver-

fary of God and your Souls.

3ly, Therefore, suffer a word of Exhortation; and it is no other than this, That you would not any longer put off your Repentance, and turning unto God. Disdain not the Counsel of the Son of Sirach, [Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day, ] Eccl. 5. 7. And again, Chap. 18. ver. 21, 22. Humble thy self before thou be fick, and in the time of Sins shew Repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy Vow in due time, and defer not until Death to be justified]. I call upon you this Day to leave your Sins; let not one Moment pass over your heads without hearty Refolves of doing fo. You know not but that this Sermon may be the last which you shall hear. You may not have another Season indulg'd unto you if you neglect this. There are many now fleeping in their Graves, who appear'd in the Publick Assemblies the last Lord's Day. They are gone to give their Account; let us prepare to give ours; and how can we do it without speedy Repentance? Therefore now whilst you enjoy the Opportunities of Grace, now whilst the Word of Reconciliation is preached to you, now whilst the Spirit is ready to convey it to your Hearts, comply with its holy Motions, break violently through all Impediments and Difficulties, lay afide all Excuses and Objections, silence all vain Pleas and Evasions, and set about this Duty in good

good earnest. Repent one Day before your Death, faid a Jewish Rabbi. His meaning was, that we should Repent every Day, because we cannot tell but that it may be our last; we are not certain that we shall live till to morro Feed not your felves then with prefumptuous and flattering Thoughts; remember this, that your presuming on long, Life will not prolong it. It is as vain as if a Man should set his Watch back some Hours, that the Time might not go too fast. Repent speedily and suddenly, for you may Dye

Let nothing then hinder you from preparing for Death, which can be done no otherwise than by speedy turning to God. I may say with that Antient Jew, \* If not now, when, \* Si non modo, quan-I pray? If you will not turn do? Cap. Patr. unto God now, what Time do you think of doing it? You that think it is too foon now, perhaps will be of the mind that it will be too late hereafter. For the Sinner's Case is much like that of Thales, (as it is reported by Plutarch), who being a Young Man, his Mother urged him to marry; but he answer'd, It was too foon: When he was grown Older, and many Years had past over his head, she urged him again to it, and now his Reply was, It is too late. I wish this may not be too truly applied unto those Persons who put off their Repentance. When they are Youthful, then they say they have Time before them, and it is too foon to be ferious: But may not these very Persons find by experience that tis too late to Repent when they have continued fo long in their evil Courses, and are grown old in their Sins? You know then what you are to do; you cannot but perceive what is your Duty and

and your Interest. You see on all accounts it is your wisest way to return to God betimes. Therefore make no tarrying; ingenuously, voluntarily and of your own accord, break off your wicked Courses, and put not that off till your last Hour which your whole Life is little enough for. Now God calls and invites you; now he wooes and beseeches you; now you may be happy if you will; and it will be your own fault if you be not. Therefore act like understanding Men, choose Life and Happiness, which is done by renouncing

of your former Sins, and that speedily.

In pursuance of the Method I first propounded, I proceed to fet before you those Motives which may be most ferviceable to stir you up to the performance of this necessary and indispensible Duty which I have endeavour'd to discover to you. Consider 1. That the chiefest and most eminent Attributes of God require this at your hands. 2. This is the proper Command of the Gospel. 3. It is the special Priviledge of the Gospel. 4. It is a Condition or Qualification that is necessary in order to Pardon and Forgiveness, to Erernal Life and Salvation. 5. It brings with it Temporal Bleffings, whereas Impenitency derives on us all manner of Temporal Evils and Curfes. 6. This latter brings Spiritual Judgments with it. 7 ly and lastly, Eternal ones.

First, I say, the choicest and most eminent Attributes of God require this Duty of Repentance at
our hands, as first his Justice. For do you not
see that it is congruous to the Divine Nature that
the Divine Laws should not be vilify'd and disparag'd, and that when they have been violated
by us, we should endeavour to repair them as
much as in us lieth? Now, this is to be done by

Repentance, for that is the only compensation (if I may so call it) on our part; and though it hath no worth, as it proceeds from us imperfect Creatures, yet God is pleased to accept of it because it is done by the Grace and Affistance of his Spirit. Wherefore after we have offended our Maker, and despised his Laws, the best course we can take is by Repentance to retract our former Miscarriages, and to own our Folly and Unadvisedness, and to acknowledge the Goodness and Justness of those Laws and Commandments which we have broken. Thus the Justice of God requires this thing of us. And so likewise doth his Goodness and Holiness; for Repentance must first wash away the Pollution of Sin before we can refemble him who is all Pu-Nor can we ever expect to draw near unto God, to have Communion with him, or to receive Favours from him, unless we first abandon our Sins, and cast off the love and practice of them. God being of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, we can never fit and prepare our felves for converse with him, unless we find a Remorse in our Souls for Sin, and endeavours in our Lives to amend our ways, and to obey the whole Will of God. Moreover, the Wisdom of God, and the very Reason of the thing it self require this of us, unless we can think and prove that it is worthy of the All-wife God to frustrate his own Designs, and to defeat his own Purposes. Did not Christ come into the World to destroy Sin; did he not flied his Blood that Sin might dye in us? Now, if he came to destroy and kill Sin in us, we cannot in Reason and Equity keep it alive, and softer it in our Souls; and all the while we do so, we act in opposition to the Wisdom of God, which defigned the contrary in his fending his Son into the 2. This World.

2. This is the proper and special Command of the Gospel. What was the great Text which John the Baptist, the fore-runner of our Saviour, preach'd upon but Repent ye? Mat. 3. 2. And in Ver. 8. Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. And did not our Blessed Master himself preach the same Doctrine, and urge the same Duty on his Auditors, Mat. 4. 17. ? From that time Jesus began to preach, and to fay, Repent. 'And 'tis recorded by St. Mark, that Jesus came preaching the Gospel, and Saying, Repent; Chap. 1. Ver. 14. The Apostles did the like at their first taking upon them their Office, Mark 6. 12. They went out and preached that Men should Repent. And 'tis observable, that preaching Repentance is emphatically stiled preaching the Gofpel; for as the fore-named Evangelist saith, that the Apostles preach'd that Men should Repent, so St. Luke relating the very fame Passage, tells us, that they went preaching the Gospel, Chap. 9. ver. 6. And this was the Charge which Christ just before his Ascension gave to his Apostles and Successors, that Repentance should be preached in his Name among all Nations, Luke 24. 47. This was the Doctrine which St. Paul proclaim'd wherever he came, Acts 20. 21. He taught publickly and from house to house, testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks Repentance towards God, as well as Faith towards our Lord Jefus Christ. And in AEts 26. 20. He shewed unto them of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they sould Repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance. And in AEts 17. 30. The times of ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all Men every where to Repent. Now, under the Gospel, now when the Times of Ignorance are past, now when so great Light shines forth in the World, now more than ever this is become our Duty. 3. As

3. As this is the proper Command, so 'tis the peculiar Priviledge of the Gofpel and New Covenant. Under the First or Old Covenant there was no fuch thing as Repentance. The Soul that finn'd was to dye. There was no Remedy and Redress for Offenders. But by the Covenant of Grace in Jesus Christ there is room for Repensance, and there is a Remedy for our Failings and Offences. This is the fole Priviledge of the Gospel; and therefore although Sinners were call'd to Repentance under the Old Testament, yet you must know that it was merely by Vertue of the Grace and Mercy of the New Testament; it was with refpect to the coming of the Messiah in the Fullness of Time. That God vouchsafes to accept of Repentance is a Favour which is indulg'd to Sinners by Jesus Christ. This is the Kindness which is tender'd to us thro' the Evangelical Dispensation. This is clear from that arguing and reafoning of St. John Baptift, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; that is, the times of the Gospel are now drawing near, the Messiah is coming, and therefore you are now encouraged to Repent of your Sins, because under the Dis-pensation of the Gospel God will be pleased to accept of hearty Repentance for the fake of Christ the Redeemer. This then is a forcible Motive to this Duty; it is a fingular Favour and Kindness that we are invited to Repentance, and that it will be accepted after we have provoked the Divine Majesty by our Sins. See then that you do not refuse this gracious Tender; lay hold on it with all feriousness and earnestness, and bless God that this Priviledge is granted to you. After the ill Management of your Talents, after you have been Spendthrifts and Bankrupts, you are

permitted and enabled to fet up again; you have leave given you to try what you can do again, and to make a better Choice after you have fool'd and cheated your felves. God is fo gracious as to constitute Repentance, and to accept of it, after we have neglected our Duty, and committed the highest Offences. By this we do as 'twere repair all our former Defects, and correct our first Failings and Misdoings. Repent then, because God gives you the Liberty of doing fo. It is infinite Mercy and Condescension that he will be pleased not to take Advantage against us, but to fuffer us to turn unto him after we have wilfully departed from him. God hath appointed us this Plank to swim upon, and secure our selves after we are Ship-wreck'd: Will you fink and be drowned rather than make use of it? O do not undervalue the Kindness and Favour of Heaven, neglect not so great a Benefit vouchsafed to us for the fake of Christ Jesus. The lapsed Angels had not this Favour, this Priviledge granted them, there was no room for Repentance, they were prefently thrown down from Heaven, there was no Kindness and Indulgence shewed to them.

\* Mankind partakes of this infinite Favour and Bleffing, the Sons of Men are permitted to Repent of their evil ways, and to turn unto God,

and to have the Benefit of his

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Mercy and Pardon through Christ the Redeemer, though this was denied to those Apostate Spirits. This is the Prerogative of the Gospel, that after we have grossy offended, we may return to our Duty; we have leave to choose again, after our first unhappy Choice; we have liberty to correct

5 4

Covenant of Grace in the Messias.

There are but two States or Conditions wherein Men can be faved, viz. Innocence or Repentance; either you must say, you have not sinned, or tho' you have sinned, yet you are heartily forry for it, and you Repent of all your evil ways, and turn from them. The former of these States you cannot lay claim to, for you have all of you come short of your Duty, you have offended God by Thoughts, Words and Actions. You cannot think to be faved by your Innocence and Integrity. They are vain and idle People, yea, they are prefumptuous and conceited heads who pretend to Perfection. You must wholly renounce that. It is Repentance that you must fly to. Fall down therefore at the Throne of Grace, and shew your felves fincere Penitents. The very nature of the New Covenant directs you to this; for Repentance is one of the Conditions of the New Covenant; and it is also one of the Priviledges of it. God gives you leave to Repent, which is infinite Mercy and Condescension; for he might have taken the forfeiture of your first Offence against him, and that is no less than Eternal Damnation; but he is pleased to call you to Repentance, and (which is more) with the Gospel there is given a special Power and Grace to Repent, so that that Call and Invitation are not in vain. The Pool is now

Now stir'd, and the Angel descends, and Healing Vertue is communicated; the Spirit is now plentifully poured forth. In a word, God not only commands you to Repent, but will enable you to

do it; of which more afterwards.

The 4th Motive which I will make use of is this, Repent, and turn to God from all your evil ways, and then you shall have the Pardon and Forgiveness of all your Sins, you shall inherit Life and Eternal Salvation. The Gospel incourages our endeavours of Repentance, in that it brings the joyful Tidings of a Saviour, who is purposely sent by God to deliver us from the Wrath to come; and this he effecteth by that unspeakable Mercy, the Forgiveness of our Sins. If you will unfeignedly Repent, you shall be partakers of this Blesfing. This is the very Motive in the Text, [Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out], i. e. that you may have your Sins pardon'd. Upon your Repentance depends the Forgiveness of your Sins, tho' you are not forgiven for your Repentance. This then may prevail with you to fet about this Task in good earnest, that you can't be forgiven without Repentance, and that if you Repent, you shall undoubtedly be forgiven. If any of you shall find Trouble on your Minds by reason of the Greatness and Heinousness of your Sins, as if they were fo great that they cannot be forgiven, I have that to fuggest to you which will quiet your Minds. It ought to be no matter of Discouragement to you, much less of Despair, that your Sins have been great and heinous, and that the greatest part of your Time and of your Life hath been spent in the commission of these. Be it known to you that, if at last you are resolved to forfake your finful ways, your former miscarriages shall not hurt you. God the Father is ready to forgive you, Christ Jesus is ready to receive you, and both are willing to extend Mercy to you.

But you will fay, How do I prove this? prove it from the Word of Truth, the Holy Scriptures, wherein it is abundantly attested, that the greatest and most notorious Sinners have been received to Favour and Mercy. Take your Bibles, and there see this confirm'd. Do you not read that Abraham was at first an Heathen and an Idolater, and lived and convers'd a long time with fuch, and yet he was kindly entertain'd by God, yea, and became his Friend and Favourite, and was the Father of the Faithful. Do we not read that Rahab the Harlot is incerted into St. Paul's Calendar of Saints, in the 11th Chapter to the Hebrews? Even David, after he had shared in the Divine Favour, degenerated so vilely as to commit the Sins of Murder and Adultery, and to remain impenitent a considerable time; for tho' his Heart presently smote him for cutting off the Lap of Saul's Garment, and for numbering the People, and for hazarding the Lives of Men in fending them for Water at the Well of Bethlem, yet he continued, about a Year, without Remorfe of Conscience, after the commission of those other great and crying Sins; notwithstanding which, he was pardon'd, and the Divine Goodness gave him fignal Tokens and Affurances of it. Do you not read that Manasseh did wickedly above all the Kings that were before him? yet he was an eminent Convert and Penitent, for (as 'tis recorded of him in 2 Chron. 33. 12.) He befought the Lord his God, and bumbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication: And this great

great Offender prov'd a fingular Example of Religion and Holiness to the end of his Life. Yea. God not only forgave him his Sins, but bleffed him with a long Reign, even the longest of any Judge or King either of Judah or Ifrael. Doth not Sacred History inform us that Nebuchadnezzar, the great Affyrian Monarch, he that thrice besieged Jerusalem, and at last utterly destroy'd the City of God, and was an implacable Enemy of the People of the most High, turn'd an humble Penitent, and confess'd and bewail'd his Sins, and submitted to the Great King of Heaven, who accepted of his Repentance, and as a Mark of his Favour towards him, permitted him to Reign above Six Years after his wonderful Metamorphosis. Shall I mention also the Ninevites, a Pagan People, who had been Sinners of the highest rank? The Heathen Historians themselves represent them as extremely lewd and luxurious, and funk into all Senfuality. And it is no wonder they were fo. feeing Sardanapalus, that wanton and effeminate Prince, Reign'd among them at that time, and had his Residence in the City of Nineve, the Seat of the Affyrian Monarchs. Yet these very Persons when they betook themselves to Fasting and Praving, and cried mightily unto God, and humbled themselves before him in Dust and Ashes, experienced the Mercy of Heaven towards them. So remarkable was the Clemency and Mercy of God in giving them Grace to Repent, and in Pardoning their Sins, that (as we are told by a late Eminent Writer) the Christians of Ethiopia, or (which is the same) the Abyssin Church keep a Fast of three Days Yearly in memory of this.

I might pass to the New Testament, and remind you of Matthew a griping Publican, and

Zacheus

Zacheus of the same scandalous Employment, (for none but Men of ill Fame were employed in gathering the Emperor's Taxes and Customs; they were noted for their Extortion and Oppression, and therefore 'tis no wonder that when one in this Employment acted honeftly and justly, there was a Statue erected to his Memory with this Inscription, Καλώς πιλωνήσαντη, To the Honour of the Men that discharg'd the Office of a Publican well and laudably). One of the Persons whom I mentioned, Zacheus, we are fure from what we read of him, was dishonest and unjust in his Place, and 'tis probable the other was fo too; but both these were graciously receiv'd by our Saviour. Mary Magdalen, who had been a noted Strumpet, and who had been possessed with seven Devils, was taken into Favour. We read that Christ gave a merciful Discharge to the penitent Adulteress, Go, and fin no more. You will not be angry with my Conjecture, if I suggest to you, that the meaning of our Saviour's writing with his Finger in the dust of the Pavement of the Temple, where he found this Woman, was that her Sins were blotted out; for what is written in the dust is easily obliterated; and therefore this is used in a Proverbial way of speaking, as some of you know very well. Next, I may mention Paul, who (as he confesses himself) had been a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, and was accessory to the Murder of St. Stephen, for he assisted at the Stoning of him; and yet this notorious Criminal found Mercy at the Hands of the great Lover of Souls. Peter, even when he was an Apofile, and one of the three Favourites and Confidents of our Lord, openly denied him, and backt it with Curfing and Swearing, with horrid Oaths and Execrations; be not offended if I say he behaved

haved himself more like a Russian or Hestor than an Apostle; but he obtained Mercy and Forgive-

ness upon his going out and weeping bitterly.

And many other Instances there are, not only in the Book of God, but in the History of all Ages, of God's shewing Favour to great and scandalous Sinners. Augustine, that famous and renowned Light of the Church, had been a wild Youth, and fell not only into the gross Error of the Manichees, but was of very vitiated Morals. He shew'd himself in too many Actions how vain and lewd he was, how licentious and wicked; but his Conversion was as notable as his Miscarriages, as is well known to those that have read his Life. Martin Luther was a besotted Monk, and practis'd all the Superstitions and Follies of that Order of Men; and yet upon feeing and abandoning the Wickedness of his former Life, he was accepted of God, and raised by him to be an effectual Instrument of his Glory in the Church, by reclaiming others from their idolatrous and wicked Practifes, and by promoting the Purity and Simplicity of the Christian Religion. And many more Examples might be produced of this fort.

Now, after all that hath been said, doth any one in this Congregation doubt whether he shall not find Favour with God, and have his most heinous Sins forgiven, if he be truly sensible of his Guilt, and heartily Repent of what he hath done? Is there any ground left for such Language as this, Is there Mercy for me? May I hope for Forgiveness, I who have spent all my Days, or a great part of them, in an irreligious and prophane manner? I fear that God will never look favour-

ably on fuch a profligate Wretch as I am.

What is the Reason of such Complaints and Fears as these, after I have proved from abundant Instances that God is wont to pardon the worst of Sinners, when they Repent? Have I not shewed, that all of you may come, and be welcome, to the Redeemer and Saviour of the World? Have I not made it plain and evident, that the greatness of your Sins is no Bar against the Mercy of God ?

It may be there are some very wicked Livers that hear me this Day. But be not discouraged. I speak to you: I am sent to you this Day. I should not rightly discharge my Office, that is, of an Embassador of Christ, if I did not proclaim Peace and Pardon to all that will relinquish their Sins. I should be injurious to the Grace of God tender'd in the Gospel, if I did not offer it to every one here. There is no Man amongst you that can have been a greater Sinner than Manaffeh; there is none of the other Sex that hath been more feandalous than Mary Magdalen. Be not then difmayed, but take courage; after the Example of these Persons that have been mentioned to you, leave your Sins, and make your application to the incenfed Majesty, and he will certainly receive you. The most ungodly Person that I can speak to, is invited to Repent, and he is affored of Pardon. And this is the great Work of a Minister of the Gospel to offer this Pardon, and to urge you to accept of it.

Will you believe the Scriptures? then read Pfal. 68. 18. He, that is the Lord Christ, (for the Pfalmist speaks of him there) received Gifes for the rebellious. Read Mat. 18. 11. where our Lord himfelf tells us, that he came to feek and fave that which is loft. Read Rom. 5. 6. where the Apostle ac-

quaints

quaints us, that Christ died for the ungodly. And in another place he declares, that Christ Fesus came into the World to fave Sinners, I Tim. 1. 15. and even the chiefest of Sinners; for he adds, of whom I am chief. Bear these places of Scripture in your Minds; and it had been well if you had had your Bibles here with you to confult the Texts. (They were good Times, even the Primitive Times, when Christian Hearers brought their Bibles with them to Church; and we shall never discharge our Ministry aright, nor you your Hearing aright, till that practice returns again; for then People shew that they have a great Reverence for the Word of God, and for what is delivered to them. And if I were to begin my Preaching again in the course of my Ministry, I would by all means prevail with my Hearers to make their Bibles their constant Companions at Church.) I befeech you let these Places of Holy Writ, which I have now rehearfed to you, be your Encouragement. You see that tho' you be of the number of the rebellious, of the loft, of the ungodly, of the chief of Sinners, yet there is Mercy defigned for you if you heartily Repent. It is a Rabinical Saying, quoted among the other Jewish Proverbs, Nothing is able to withstand Repentance. That is, (as I conceive) there is no Fault, no Sin, no Offence so great but Repentance washes it away. And therefore let none of you infilt upon the Greatness and Grievousness of your Sins. True Repentance will wholly abolish them, as you fee in the feveral Examples of those who have been notorious Transgressors. Let this then incourage you to bid adieu to your former evil ways, and to turn unto God. I tell thee, whoever thou art in this Assembly, that there is Mercy and Forgiveness for Thee, for Thee if thou

Repentest.

That I may dismiss you from this place with full Convictions of this Truth, fuffer me to produce some fresh Examples out of the New Testament. 'St. Peter's Auditors whom he preach'd to, Att 2. were as flagitious Offenders as any whofoever, worse, much worse than any can be in this Congregation; for they had imbrued their Hands in the Blood of Jesus Christ. See how he lays before them this Sin, Ver. 22, 23. (and now if you had your Bibles with you, you might read these Texts with me) Te Men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your selves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and stain. Here is their execrable Crime; yet this Preacher affores them, that if they will Repent of this horrid Fact, they shall be admitted to Mercy and Favour: For so he exhorts and encourages them in Ver. 38. Repent, and (as a token of your doing so) be Baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of Sins. Tho' your Sins be never so heinous, they shall be pardon'd if you fincerely Repent. And so in the next Chapter, the same Apostle speaks thus to the same fort of Persons, Ver. 13, 14, 15. The God of our Fathers hath glorified bis Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go : But ye denied the Holy One and the Just. and defired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hathraifed from the dead. And yet, though these Miscreants were thus

with

thus guilty, even of the innocent Blood of the Lamb of God, the Apostle lets them know, that this Sin shall be forgiven them upon their Repentance; for thus you find him addressing himself to them, Ver. 19. Repent ye, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. Whence you cannot but infer, that there is no Sin whatfoever but shall be forgiven, if we heartily turn from it unto God. It is true, you are not able to fatisfy God's Juflice for the Sins you have committed against him; you cannot expiate the Guilt of the least sinful Thought. This can no otherwise be forgiven than through God's Free Grace and Mercy in Jesus Christ. Tell me then whether that Grace and Mercy which forgave the least Sin, cannot as well forgive the greatest. Yea, the Psalmist uses this as a Motive to prevail with God for the Forgiveness of his Sins, Pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great, Pfal. 25. 11. The Greatness of the Divine Mercy will be discovered in passing by our Sins that are fo great. Therefore you fee I have reason to mention this as an Encouragement to you to lament and leave your most beinous Sins, namely, because our good God delights to shew his infinite Kindnefs in pardoning fuch.

And now let me ask you once again, Can any thing be so dear and welcome to you as the Forgiveness of your Sins, and the Salvation of your Souls?
What can be more welcome to a condemned Malefactor than a Pardon? What can be more acceptable to a Sinner that lies under the Sentence
of the Law, than the Remission of his Sins? Now,
consider that this is the happy Essect of turning
unto God; this is the blessed Fruit of renouncing
our Sins, as I have undeniably proved to you.
Wherefore upon this Consideration let me prevail

with you to abandon your evil ways. Upon the Tidings of Pardon your Hearts should melt into a Godly Sorrow; and that should force every one of you to cry out, and fay, O unspeakable, O inestimable Priviledge! Is this youchsafed to me? Is it possible that I who am so vile a Sinner, whose Offences are fo grievous, and which have been perfifted in fo long a time, should obtain Mercy and Forgiveness? Is Pardon reserved for such a worthless Creature as I am? Is Heaven-gate open'd to me, and may I enter therein? will arise and go to my Father, and fall down before him, and acknowledge all my Offences, and titterly abhor them, that I may be partaker of fo undeferved a Mercy. It is this Free Grace of God that powerfully excites me to bid farewel to all my Sins: It is the affurance of Pardon that is an

effectual incentive to Repentance.

Observe what it was that induced Benhadad, the King of Syria, and those who belong'd to him, to humble and fubmit themselves to the King of Ifrael: Behold, we have heard that the Kings of the House of Hrael are merciful Kings: Wherefore let us put fackeloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the King of Ifrael; peradventure he will fave our lives, 1 Kings 20. 31. And accordingly they went to the King in that submissive posture, and found Favour at his hands. Much more, the hope of Mercy and Pardon should encourage Sinners to draw near unto God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He is a merciful and gracious God, and that is sufficient to stir up in us a kindly Sorrow and Remorfe for our Sins. Those are winning and ravishing words which you read in Fer. 3. 12, 13. Return thou backstiding Ifrael, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my Anger to fall upon you ;

for

you: for I am merciful, faith the Lord, and I will not keep Anger for ever; only acknowledge thine Iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God. What can be fairer and milder than this ? Yea, what can be more obliging and generous than this? Only acknowledge thine Iniquities; do but own your selves to be Sinners, and Repent of what you have done, and you shall be forgiven. And was there ever more pathetick and powerful Oratory than that in Ezek. 33. 11. Say unto them, As I live, faith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil way; for why will ye die? Thus God is pleased gracioully to invite penitent Sinners to come to him, and partake of his Mercy, and by a folemn Oath he assures them that he is in good carnest, and really defigns their Eternal Welfare. You may at your leifure peruse the whole 14th Chapter of Hofea, which is an Exhortation to Repentance, and there you will find that God is so ready to pardon Sin, that he puts words into our Mouths to beg it of him, as you may observe in the 2d Verse of that Chapter, Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and fay unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.

And now, my Brethren, can you refift, can you withstand such powerful and affectionate Invitations, such pathetick Wooings and Intreaties as these are? Altho' you have not for the time past walk'd circumspectly, and redeem'd the Time, but have wilfully neglected your known Duty, yet remember there is hope concerning this thing; for if at length you will accept of the Offers of Grace, you shall be admitted and received. You have the Word, and you have the Oath of God

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for it; and you can't have a greater Assurance than this.

But you will urge it again, Can fuch Sinners as we be received? Will not our former Miscarriages be objected to us? Will not our past Offences exclude us from the Divine Favour? Will not God refuse to extend his Kindness to us when he obferves what we have been, and how long we have continued in Rebellion? I Answer, It is true (as I have suggested before) that the first and highest Commendation is not to fin, but that we cannot attain to here: therefore the second and next to it is to amend our Faults. Next to Innocency is Repentance; yea truly, in the merciful Eye of Heaven these two are the same. The pithy Moralist could say, Quem panitet peccasse, penè est innocens. I need not translate it to some of you, but the plain Sense of it is discovered to you all from the Holy Scriptures, which acquaint us that he that heartily and unfeignedly Repents of his vicious Life, is in the fight of God as if he had never defiled and corrupted himself. He that fincerely returns to the discharge of his Duty, is reckon'd as if he had never started from it. This is evident from the famous Instance of the Prodigal Son, who tho' he had lewdly spent his Patrimony, and had lived in Debauchery a long time, yet, when he began to reflect on his doings, and at once to return to himself and to his Father's house, he was extremely encouraged to it by his indulgent and compassionate Parent, who ran to meet him, and kindly receiv'd and embrac'd him, and treated him with a higher degree of Favour and Love than his Brother who had flay'd at home, and was never guilty of those Misdemeanors and Disorders that he was: For the good Man's Heart

was full, as you may perceive, and thus he vents it, My Son was dead, faith he, and is alive again; he was lost, but is now found; wherefore it is meet that we should make merry and be glad, Ver. 24, 32. of the 15th of St. Luke. You that are affectionate Parents understand this language better than others. In the Case here before us, suffer me to say that the indulgent Father seem'd to be as prodigal of his Kindnesses, as his undutiful and spendthrift Son had been of his Portion. But what could not Repentance do? This brought him into Favour with his kind Parent after all his Extravagancies. This made him as acceptable to him, as if he had ne-

ver gone from his House.

Yea, you see that he was receiv'd and cares'd by his Father above the rate of that Entertainment which his other Son ever found. Which exactly verifies what our Blessed Lord pronounced in the like Case, Luke 15. 7. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance; that is, those who need not such a Repentance as others do, those that in the general course of their Lives have not run out into great and scandalous Sins: These in comparison of other great Offenders are said to need no Repentance; that is, as I have faid, not fuch as others do. But observe here the transcendent Kindness of our Heavenly Father, which is demonstrated from this Joy which is in Heaven at the Return of a Prodigal Son, at the Repentance of a lost Sinner. See as it is among kind and loving Parents, we may observe that they are more fensibly affected with Joy and Gladness for the Recovery of one of their Children that hath been dangerously Sick, than for the Health of all the others who remain whole and found.

found. So it is here; the Angels of Heaven express more sensible Joy when one Sinner is reclaim'd and converted, than when great numbers of Righteous Persons persevere in their Holiness, and never fall into those Sins which waste their Consciences. This surely cannot but remove all your Scruples and Fears of not being receiv'd by God. And I might tell you further, that there are in this 15th Chapter of St. Luke, besides the Parable of the Prodigal Son, two others, viz. of the lost Sheep, and of the lost piece of Silver, to illuftrare and confirm the Thing which our Saviour defign'd to inform the World of, viz. That Repenting Sinners shall be received with Joy and

If you fill infift upon the greatness and beinousness of your Sins, I advise you to read Isa. 1. 16, Ce. (Here your Bibles would do you fervice, to acquaint you more intimately with fo excellent a Passage of Scripture) where is first an Exhortation to Repentance, Was ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well; and then the Motive or Inducement follows, Though your Sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimfon, they shall be as wooll: That is, though your Sins be very grievous and fcandalous, yet they shall be forgiven upon Repentance. Perhaps the manner of Expression here used is an allusion to the Garb of Proflitutes and Curtefans, the vilest and worst fort of Sinners; for these of old were wont to adorn and fet off themfelves with Scarlet

and Purple, as is intimated in \* Meretricem pudo- that of \* Plautus, and other rem gerere magis debet Antient Writers. And thence quam pur pur am. In Affected William Populo. it is probable, Mystical Babylon, who is stiled the Mother of Harlots, is said to be arayed in purple and scarlet colour, Rev. 17. 4. But whether this Criticism hold true or no, that is, whether there were any Allusion of this nature in these words, I will not now be sollicitous to enquire. It is plain from that Passage of the Prophet Isaiah, that Scarlet Sins are Sins of an high and heinous nature; and it is as plain that these, even these are made White as Snow; that is, those who committed them are absolved and pardon'd

whenever they heartily Repent of them.

Say not then that your Sins are of that quality that they will not admit of Pardon; fay not that you are those who have so highly offended that there is no Mercy for you. This is utterly false; for I have proved, that the most impious and profligate Sinners may come and be accepted, It was Celfus's Cavil of old against Christianity, that it invited and entertain'd the worst fort of Men, " The Kingdom of God, faith he, flands open " to receive Fools and Sinners, the Unjust, the "Thief, the Breaker up of Houses, the Wizard, " the Sacrilegious, and fuch like Wretches. But this is no just Exception against Christianity, but only proves this which I have been infifting upon, that all Persons are call'd to Repentance under the Gospel; all ranks of Sinners are bid to come to Christ. The worst are not excluded, for even they may belong to the Election of Grace. Our Saviour faith expresly, that he came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance, Mat. 9. 13. That is, he came not to call those who are Converted already, or those that are Righteous in their own Eyes, but those that are yet in their Sins, and are the worst of Sinners: These by his Divine Grace, he makes sensible of their Guilt,

and causes them to grieve and mourn for their former Offences. These are those who labour and are heavy laden, as our Saviour expresses it, Mat. 11. 28. and he there invites fuch Persons to come unto him, and he encourages them to do it by adding, that he will give them rest; and again in the following Verse, they hall find rest to their Souls, which they could never find in their finful ways.

This is the Thing that I have been fetting before you. I pray God fix it on your Hearts, yours especially who have lived in a constant course of Sin and Wickedness, and have been great Transgreffors and Offenders, and perhaps on that account are afraid that you shall be not accepted of God. To you I speak this Day, or rather God himself in his Holy Word speaks unto you, and invites you to Repentance. Go home and confider of this seriously, and let it effectually move you to beg of God to give you that Repentance which I have been exhorting you to. Entertain no fuch Thought as this, that your Sins are too great to be pardon'd. Remember the feveral Particulars which I have offer'd to you, and they will foon allay your Scruples and Fears. Let not any thing that I have faid encourage you to Sin, much less to continue in it, in hope of Pardon; but make use of what I have said to that purpose for which I have mention'd it, namely, to ftir you up to Repent, and even to hasten your Repentance. For now, after I have been so free with you, you will be wholly inexcufable if you delay your Repentance. And let me tell you, if this plain dealing doth not influence upon you, your Case will be so much the worse, and you will be so hardened in your Sins, that it will be next to an imposfibility to Repent of them. Therefore what you

do, do speedily; implore the Grace of God to change your Hearts and Lives; and if you do this sincerely, your Prayers will be heard and answered, and you will come and tell me, from your own Experience, that what I have Preached to you this Day, is a solid as well as a comfortable Truth, that ought not to be call'd in question.

s. I pass to the next Motive to Repentance, and that is this, That it brings with it not only Pardon of Sin, but all external Bleffings, all temporal and secular Advantages. Our turning to God diverts outward and Bodily Evils from us, and at the same time derives to us the good Things of this Life, Peace and Prosperity, and whatever other outward Mercy we defire. See a Proof of this in 2 Chron. 7. 13, &c. If I but up Heaven that there be no Rain, or if I command the Locusts to devour the Land, or if I fend Pestilence among my People, if my People which are call'd by name shall bumble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their Sin, (that is the Motive which I mention'd before) and will heal their Land; i. e. I will remove the Judgments that are upon them, and I will confer all outward Bleffings upon them: So in 1 Kings 8. 46, &c. If they fin against thee, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, yet if they shall bethink themselves, and Repent, and say, We have sinned and done perversly, and have committed Wickedness, and so return unto thee with all their Heart and all their Soul, then forgive thy people all their Transgressions, (there is the Pardon of Sin before spoken of) and give them compassion before them who carried them away captive, that they may have compassion on them; that is, that they may be freed

freed from their Captivity, that their Punishment and Affliction may be removed, and that they may be partakers of thy Favour and Kindness, even as to the Things of this Life. And this is the import of these words of the Almighty by the Prophet Jeremy, Chap. 4. Ver. 1. If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me; and if thou wilt put away thy abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove; that is, thou shalt not be destroyed and laid desolate, thou shalt enjoy the Blessings which thou art at present in possession of, and no Inselicities and Miseries shall be thy portion in

the place where thou now dwellest.

That Text in the Prophecy of Ezekiel is to our present purpose, Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions; so Iniquity shall not be your ruine; Chap. 18. Ver. 30. I might refer you to the 2d Chapter of Joel, which is a Proof of what I am now insisting on : Therefore now, faith the Lord, Turn ye unto me with all your Hearts, and with Fasting, and Weeping, and Mourning, and vent your Hearts and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, Ver. 12. And then in the enfuing Verles of that Chapter, you may fee what are the happy Effects and Confequences of this turning unto God, viz. God's returning and repenting, and leaving a blessing behind him, Ver. 14. Where I conceive this [him] should rather be rendred [that], viz. That thing which had been spoken of before in the former part of the Chapter, namely, the Terrible Army which is there described. So that the Sense is this, Who knows if God will, after all his dreadful Judgments and Calamities, leave a Bleffing in the close of them. And from the 19th Verse to the 27th, there is an enumeration of those particular Bleffings and Mercies which God promifes

to confer upon them as the Reward of their turning unto him, and Repenting of their Sins. The Case of the Ninevites is well known to you, Tee forty days and Ninevels shall be destroyed; that is, unless they Repent and turn from their evil ways. A Reprieve is granted them for Forty Days, but it is on Consideration of their future Repentance. If they sincerely turn unto God, they shall be rescued from the impendent Destruction, and they shall have their former Mercies and Enjoyments continued to them.

Doth not this prove a good Motive, and is not this a strong way of reasoning Men into Repentance, that it is attended with all Worldly Bleffings, whereas on the contrary, Temporal Judgments and Calamities are the Fruit and Issue of Impenitence? Let the words of our Bleffed Saviour Luke 13. 3. be imprinted on your Minds, Excepi ye Repent, ye shall all likewise perish t And the fame words are repeated in the 5th Verse; and in both he affures us of this Truth, That outward Indoments are justly made the Recompence of Sin. If Men will be so daring as to offend God, and continue in the commission of their Wickedness, and never ferionsly Repent of it, they must expect the Judgments of God in this World, for that is meant here, when he faith, They shall Perish: which refers to the Verses foregoing, concerning the fatal Accidents which befel the Galileans, and those on whom the Tower of Silvam fell. If you Repent not (faith he) look for the like Evils; and never promise your selves the continuance of outward Bleffings without Repentance.

Let us apply this to our felves; let us of this Nation and Kingdom think of this, that nothing can be our Security but Repentance. This is our

Fort,

Fort, our Castle, and place of Defence; this is our strong Walls and Rampiers; this is our Preservative and Protection; this is our Strength and Safety. But if we live in our Sins, and still proceed to provoke the Almighty, we may expect that all kinds of Evils and Calamities will rush in upon us. Therefore I may boldly pronounce this unto you, that a bloody Civil War, a raging Pestilence, a dreadful Fire, the Plots and Machinations of our Enemies, a long, expensive and bloody War abroad against an implacable Adversary, Divisions and Distractions among our selves, Invafions and Infurrections, (all which we have felt) preach Repentance to England, and preach it with great Earnestness. These Calamities and Judgments should lead us to Repentance, and teach us Righteousness, and effectually remind us of reforming our Lives. I intreat you then that you would suffer this Motive to have its due effect and operation upon you. If you will turn unto God by unfeigned Repentance, this alone can fecure you from perishing. Nay, if there be but a possibility of security in the time of Wrath and Vengeance, even this is Incouragement to Repent, and this may be laid hold on for our Comfort, as you see in Zeph. 2. 3. After the People of Judah were exhorted to Repentance, this is adjoined as a Motive, It may be ye hall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger]. Peradventure Mercy shall be shewed to you. Who knows but that you shall be deliver'd? Even this is an Inducement to Repentance. Shall not then those more positive and punctual Promises of Deliverance which we meet with in Scripture, excite us to forfake our Sins, and to turn to God? And on the contrary, shall not those peremptory Threatnings, which we read in

that Holy Book, deter us from persisting in our evil ways? If we Repent not, all kinds of Temporal Punishments and Plagues will unavoidably

overtake us.

6. Not only Temporal but Spiritual Judgments are laid out for Impenitent Sinners: What else is the meaning of those words in Rev. 2. 5. Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou Repent.] Removing the Candlestick is taking away the Light of the Gospel, depriving a People of the Means of Grace, a debarring them of the Opportunities of gaining Saving Knowledge, and of attaining to Life and Salvation. This Judgment is threatned to a Nation which Repents not of its evil doings; and truly upon this account we of this Nation may justly fear that the Candlestick will be remov'd from us, that the Opportunities shall be denied us, namely, because we have walk'd so unworthy of them, because we have slighted and difregarded them, because we have not been brought to a fight of our Sins, and hearty Repentance for them. The Ministers of the Gospel may at this day cry out in their Pulpits, as Bradford heretofore at the Stake, Repent, O England, Repent. If you wish well to your selves, not only in relation to your Bodies and Estates, but as to your Souls and their Spiritual Concerns, be exhorted to turn unto God by fincere Repentance and Amendment of Life. If you are defirous that the Gospel should be continued with you, and that the Means of Life and Happiness should not be taken from you, use this Expedient, this only Expedient and Remedy. By your speedy Repentance you will secure both to your selves and your Posterity, the Light of the Gospel, but by your

Impenitence, and persisting in your Wickedness, you will certainly provoke the Almighty God to deliver you up to Darkness and Ignorance, and he may justly suffer you to return to the Superstition and Idolatry of your Fore-fathers, either Pa-

gan or Popis Idolatry.

7ly and lastly, I will name but this one Motive more, (and I think there is no need of adding any other when I have named this) viz. That you will be Eternally undone, you will be for ever miserable and wretched if you Repent not. Unless you weep and lament here, you must be hurried to that place of Tears and Tortures, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of Teeth to all Eternity. You are then to Repent on pain of Everlasting Misery, on pain of being deprived of God's Presence for ever. After the Baptist had preach'd the Doctrine of Repentance, and had bid them bring forth Fruits meet for it, he adjoins this as a forcible Motive, Mat. 3. 10. The Axe is laid unto the root of the Trees, therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, even the Everlasting Burnings, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, and for all those who by their Impenitence and Hardness imitate the nature and practife of those damned Spirits. See then that this Motive have a due Influence upon you; and (to speak in the Apostle's words) do not after your hardness and impenitent Heart treasure up unto your selves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, Rom. 2. 5. Remember this, that Hell is prepared for none but the impenitent. If you will feriously and throughly Repent, you shall not only escape Temporal Judgments, and be freed from Spiritual Punishments and Evils in this Life (of which which I spake before) but you shall hereby avoid the Wrath to come; you shall secure your Happi-

ness in the highest Heavens.

Thus you are incompass'd with Arguments, you are beset with Motives on all sides. Considerations taken from this Life and from another call you to Repentance. \* All Things speak in favour of Repentance, loquatur in gratary the Jewish Doctors: Every

thing makes for the Penitent.

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Which way foever you look you are invited to Repent, and forsake your Sins; you are encouraged to turn unto the Lord. Behold! I set before you this Day Life and Death. If you will abandon your Iniquities, Life and Happiness are your portion; but if you still persist in your evil doings, what can you expect but Death and Destruction?

You must not fondly imagine that God will always wait your leifure. Your wilful neglecting and affronting of Divine Goodness cannot but be recompensed with Severity and Vengeance. What can you look for but Curfes and Judgments, when you remain impenitent, notwithstanding all the Overtures of Mercy and Kindness, yea, maugre all the Plagues which God hath denounced against those who continue in their finful ways? Thus much shall suffice to be spoken in pursuance of that Head of my Discourse, namely, the Motives to excite you to the practice of the Duty of Repentance. I hope they will prove effectual to ftir you up to mind this great Concern in good earnest, and to fet about it with all Zeal and Vigour.

I now proceed to the Last Part of my Task, and that is to set before you some plain Rules and

Directions, in the observing of which you may certainly attain this excellent and necessary Grace of Repentance. What shall we do to be saved? said St. Peter's Auditors : Repent, said St. Peter. But then it may be ask'd further, What shall we do to Repent? This is as important a Question as the other. And this is that which I must betake my self to in the next place, viz. to let you know what are the Means and Helps for attaining of true Gospel-Repentance? For you must remember this, that though Conversion and Repentance be the Gift of God, and are receiv'd from him, yet they are bestow'd in the use of certain Means: which Means we must not neglect and omit. That you may then attain to this Divine Grace, and difcharge this Evangelical Duty, I offer to you these following Directions: 1. Shake off all Drowfinels, and look about you with great Concernedness, and be very Inquisitive. 2. Sit down and reflect on the State and Condition you are in: Observe both your Sin and your Mifery. 3. Be sensible of your Inability to help and relieve your felves. 4. Be apprehensive of that Relief and Remedy which is offer'd to you in the Gospel. 5. Fix your Eyes on Christ's Sufferings. 6. Lay hold on the Promises of the Gospel. 7. Make use of the outward Means of Repentance, viz. Earnest Prayer, diligent Reading of God's Word, Hearing the Word preach'd and applied, a careful attending to, obferving and improving of God's Providence.

Security, be Inquisitive, Busy and Active. Never think to do any thing considerably towards the Work of Repentance, unless you first bid farewel to Sloth. What shall we do? was the startling Question

Question of those Persons who had Thoughts of Repentance. The Arrow which the Apostle had shot stuck fast in their sides, it gall'd and griev'd them exceedingly, they were uneafy and restless, therefore they came crying, Men and Brethren, give us your Advice, tell us what we must do, what course we must take to be easy and safe. The Traveller who is desirous to be in the right way, enquires of Passengers whom he meets with, he often acks, and is very follicitous to know whether he be in the direct road. So is it with the Persons who have serious Thoughts of Repentance, and are desirous to amend their Lives. What shall we do? say they. We will do any thing. Nay, What shall we suffer? We will undergo any thing that we may be in the number of true Gospel Penitents, and so have our Sins blotted out. We will venture on Difficulties and Dangers; we will attempt any Enteprise be it never so hazardous; we will with all our Hearts do and suffer what you prescribe us; we will chearfully follow your Directions. Thus this first Particular for all the others that ensue. If you be inquisitive, if you ask after the true Remedy of your Malady, if you are willing to submit to the Prescriptions which are proper for your Case, and if you have laid aside Sloth and Security, you are in the direct way to the attaining of this excellent Grace.

2. I desire you to sit down seriously, and reslect on your State and Condition. By which I mean these two things; first, that you would reslect on your Sins; secondly, on your Danger. First, Six down, and cast your Eyes back on your Sins. The Man that would turn unto God must be very careful to observe this Rule. He must set some Time apart to take an impartial view of himself,

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and to consider of what he hath done. He must look back into his Life and Manners: He must fearch his Heart and Actions: He must rifle his Soul, and examine his Conversation: He must take notice how and in what manner he hath broken God's Commands, and turn'd away from his Maker, and turn'd unto Satan and the World. When the Traveller finds himself out of the right way, and going on in a wrong one, he must go back again; so he that is a Sinner is out of his way, he hath ftray'd and wander'd from the right path; wherefore 'tis necessary that he go back again; and this he must do in the first place by looking back on himself and his Actions, by reflecting on his past Behaviour, by turning his Eye upon his former Life. This is as the Foundation or Ground-work to the whole Fabrick of Repentance. I need not therefore, I hope, be urgent with you to lay this well.

Let the Exhortations in the Holy Scripture prevail with you to follow this Direction, as that in Pfal. 119. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. Observe the connection of these words, and the dependance of one part upon the other : The Pfalmist thought on his ways, and then he turned his Feet to God's Testimonies; that is, he Repented heartily of his Sins. If we would feriously think of our ways, and deliberately ponder our evil doings, we should hereby put our felves into the way of Repenting. This Method is prescribed likewise in Lam. 3: 40. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Searching and trying are in order to turning unto God. If you would effectually do the latter, fee that you be very careful to perform the former. When the Prophet Haggai had reminded the

the Jews of their Wickedness, and had reprov'd them for it, that he might promote and advance their Repentance, he adds ver. 5. Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways; and he repeats in ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways; set your Heart upon your ways, as 'tis in the Original; let your Hearts and Minds be employed about this great and weighty matter; pry into your Lives; take a survey of your Manners; make a full discovery of your Condition.

First, Endeavour to be convinc'd of Sin in general: Secondly, Begin your Repentance with a fight of some particular Sin. First, I say, sit down, and feriously reflect on Sin in general. If you would be godly Penitents, make it your great Bufiness to enquire into the detestable nature of Sin, You have hitherto perhaps look'd upon it in a false Glass; but now come near, and view it in its own colours, observe it in its own dimensions and proportions, and then you will understand what it is. The Confideration of Sin under a false Notion is that which so often betrays us to the commission of it; but the true Consideration of Sin brings us to our felves, and to true Repentance. For as Plato said of Vertue, if it were to be feen (as other Objects are) with the corporeal Eve, Mankind could not but fall in love with it: So it is as true, that if Sin were presented to our view in its own deformed Shape, Men would generally loath and hate it. But Sin though it be most deformed, yet like a cunning Harlot paints her Face, shews itself in some handsome appearance of Pleasure or Profit, (as I have told you before) that it may steal away our Hearts, and make us doat upon it. But if we would take the pains

pains to wipe off the Paint, and to strip this counterfeit Beauty of all its meretricious bravery, whereby it inveigles and allures unwary Sinners, and if we would view it in its proper and genuine Shape, it is certain that nothing would appear fo loathfome, fo abominable. And this course we must take, that we may abhor Sin, grieve for it, and turn from it. If we once fee the vileness and odiousness of Sin, we shall soon Repent of it. Behold it then as it is in itself, i. e. observe how contrary it is to the Divine and Holy Nature of God, how it contradicts his Laws and Commands, how it bids defiance to his Will and Pleasure, how it is attended with an inward Vileness and Turpitude, and runs counter to all that is Holy and Good. Thus take a view of Sin in general.

But because this alone will not be effectual to Repentance, you must proceed yet further, and make a particular survey of your own Sins. If you faithfully do this, you will groan under the burden of them. Observe this in St. Paul, Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, or, from this body of death! He refers to his own particular Sins, this heavy load, faith he, which I carry about me, and which presses me down, I find in myself a natural proness to all Vice, and this is the Spring of all those vicious Actions which I have been guilty of. This then is that which I advise you to, be not only sensible of the vile nature of Sin in the general, but be apprehensive of your own particular Defilement, and those actual Transgressions which arise from it in your Lives. Be exact in taking notice of every individual Trespass and Failing in your Thoughts, in your Words, and in your Deeds.

Survey

Survey the variety of Sins which thy Life is defiled with, thy omissions of Good, and commisfions of Evil, thy Sins against the first and the fecond Table, against God, against Men, and against thy self, private Sins, and those that have been open and publick, Sins of thy Youth, and of thy Riper Years. Collect all thy Sins together, look on them all at once. Examine this black Catalogue, read it over, scan it often, and say, Thus I have fin'd in this Capacity, and thus in that; thus in this Relation, and thus in that. In short, represent as fully as thou canst the whole series of thy Sins to thy Thoughts; call them all to remembrance, and fet them in order before thee. And to move thee more effectually to this, think ferioully how at the last Day all thy Sins will be prefented before thee, whether thou wilt or no; thy Memory will retrieve all thy past Actions of its own accord; the Book of Conscience will be open'd and exposed, and every miscarriage of thy Life shall be accounted for. Do thou then anticipate that great Audit by bringing all things to account now; and do it the rather because thou wilt thereby promote thy Repentance, which will prepare thee for thy Appearance before that great Tribunal. Consider the vast number of thy Sins, think of the multitude of thy Offences. The great Heap of thy Sins being fet before thine Eyes, and urg'd upon thy Mind, may be serviceable to work Remorfe in thee. The terrible Muster of so many Sins may affright thee. Again, Confider the heinous Aggravations of thy Faults; call thy Sins to remembrance with all their Circumstances; remember how they have been committed notwithstanding solemn Promises of Amendment, after great Convictions, against many Favours and Benefits conferr'd on thee, in defiance of those Punishments and Judgments which have been inflicted on thee; and on several other accounts thy Sins are great and heinous. The Consideration of this may be useful to work Sorrow and Grief in

thy Soul.

And after thou hast taken an account of thy self as to every particular Sin, thou wilt find that a distinct and peculiar fight of some one special Sin, will be useful if not necessary towards working Repentance in thee. When thou hast look'd on all thy Sins, thou may'ft more stedfastly cast thine Eye on one particular Vice and great Enormity, and dwelling upon that, thou wilt find thy Heart exceedingly humbled, and more than ordinary Compunction will follow it. Thus in Acts 2. if you compare the 23d Verse with the 37th, you will find that it was the Consideration and Reflection upon some particular Sin which wrought their Contrition and Conversion. Te have taken, faith St. Peter, and by wicked hands crucified and flain the Lord of Life; and it is probable the Apostle infifted on this horrid Fact of theirs, and press'd it on their Consciences with great earnestness. [When they heard this, they were prick'd in their Heart]. This great and crying Sin being urged and let home upon them, was the occasion and means of their Conviction and Conversion. And in like manner, if you shall have one grievous Sin reprefented to your Minds and Consciences, that may make way for your true Sorrow and Remorfe for all the rest. Every one of you knows his own Guilt best; and therefore I leave this Duty to your own particular management: but I only remind you of this, that you would do it faithfully, and as in the fight of God. Search your Hearts and Lives, especially enquire into that Sin which is most crying and heinous. Consider this in all its Circumstances, and set it before you with all its Aggravations; and this, I hope, will be an effectual Method to bring you to a true, sincere

and Evangelical Repentance.

Secondly, As you must by all means endeavour to come to a fight and sense of your Sins, so you must likewise rightly apprehend and be sensible of your Danger and Misery. In order to Repentance it is requisite, that you not only take an impartial view of the Evil Nature of Sin, but likewise of the Evil Confequences, that is, the Punishment of it. First, in this Life it is Sin that procures the Divine Anger and Vengeance. For this alone we are visited with all kinds of Evils and Calamities; by reason of this, Fears and Disquiet invade our Minds, Afflictions are render'd intolerable, and every thing that happens is turn'd into a Cross to They are our Sins that withhold good things from us, but bring down the greatest Evils upon us. Thus behold Sin in its direful Effects and Fruits, and this certainly can't but create in you a loathing and abhorring of every evil way. Do you not plainly fee, that you make your felves miferable in this World by indulging your felves in Vice and Wickedness? Will not this Consideration have an influence upon you? Do you not know, that the Wrath of God will be remarkably shew'd against Whoredom, Drunkenness, Swearing, Oppression, Pride, Covetousness, and all other Enormities? Do you not consider, that though God defers sometimes to punish Sinners, yet he will not fail to recompence them at last? He will come with irrefistible Vengeance either in this World or the other.

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Which is the next thing I defire you to consider of. God declares his Anger against Sin not only here but hereafter. Think of this then, that thou shalt suffer the Eternal Torments of Hell for what thou hast done here, thou shalt be damn'd Everlaftly for thy Sinning in this Life. And think of it how it will vex and torment thy Soul that thou haft loft Eternal Happiness for a Momentary Enjoyment, that thou hast depriv'd thy self of Heavenly Joys for Earthly and Carnal Delights. This Confideration will hereafter pain the Conscience, and make it rave. Consider then now (whilst there is hope, whilst there is help for thee) the sad and miserable State of the Damned. Be daily thinking of the Wrath of God due to Sinners, and let the sense of this, and of thy Danger and Misery

cause thee to hasten thy Repentance.

Confider likewise the Forbearance of God towards thee. Thou haft feen many fnatch'd away in their Sins, and overtaken by the just Judgment of God, but thou survivest them, and art not only alive, but enjoyest the comfortable Blessings of Health, Peace and Plenty, and art not deprived of the constant Means and Opportunities of gaining Benefit to thy Soul. Those whose Sins were not so heinous as thine, those who perhaps would not have committed fuch and fuch Sins unless thou hadst encouraged them by thy Example, those are taken out of the World, and it may be justly feared that they are tormented in another, and that there is no Help and Relief for them; but thou art still in a State of Probation, thou art upon thy good Behaviour: If thou wilt renounce thy Sins, and turn unto God, thou shalt yet find Mercy, and thy former Iniquities shall not debar thee of Favour from the Almighty. Endeavour to fee thy

thy past Ingratitude, take notice of the wonderful Kindness of God to thee, and let this melt thee into Remorfe. Observe the particular Bleffings and Favours bestow'd upon thee, and let these lead thee to a kindly Sorrow for thy Misdoings. Nathan told David that God had done thus and thus for him, he had in this and that manner been bountiful to him; and lo, this very Consideration brought him to that penitential Confesfion, I have finned. Let it have the same happy effect upon you; consider the manifold Obligations which you have to Repent; and therefore know that if you perfift in your Sins you provoke him who hath infinitely obliged you, and whose Loving-kindness is better to you than Life, and consequently his Displeasure will be worse than Death. And thus I have briefly and plainly shew'd you, that this is a necessary Preparative to Repentance, namely, a serious and deliberate Consideration of our Ways, a reflecting on our State and Condition, and the great Danger we are in by reason of our Sins.

Now that you may discharge your Duty the better as to this particular, I will commend these two things to you: First, keep the Eye of your Natural Conscience clear, sully it not by any means, much more be careful not to extinguish this Candle of the Lord. For the Scripture be the hest and brightest Light (as I shall shew you afterwards, when I come to propound the constant perusing of that as one Means of Gospel-Repentance) yet I advise you to make frequent use of the Light of Reason which God hath plac'd in your Minds. It is a shame that Christians neglect this, and (which is the result of this Neglect) sin even against the Light of Nature, and are found guilty

guilty of many Enormities which their Natural Consciences check them for. And upon this very account Repentance becomes a hard Work afterwards, because they have fin'd directly against the Dictares of Nature and the common Light of Reafon. I defire you therefore to be very cautious and careful in this matter; and when you come to take a view of your Sins, be not faulty in the fame kind; let Reason and Conscience direct you, as well as the Rules and Laws of Holy Scripture.

Secondly, For your better discharging your Duty as to the forefaid Particulars, I tender this Advice to you, Go aside from the World, be apart when you are to undertake the Work of Confideration, and reflecting on your past Life. You must be retired when you fet about the practice of thefe Rules and Directions which I offer'd to you. The Noise and Bufiness of this World will hinder you from ferious thinking. You must betake your selves to your privacy when you purpose to perform this Task aright. I conceive that this is intimated to us in Zech. 12. 11, &c. The Land (ball mourn, every Family apart, and their Wives apart ]. Which represents to us the manner of their Penitential Mourning. That it might be more ferious, the feveral Families were to employ themselves in it apart. This is not a business to be done in a crowd; those that are conversant in it must be separate from the World, and from its Pleasures and Vanities. Can a Man believe that when the Papists jump our of their Tollities and loofer Revels of the Carnival into the demure Mortifications and Severities of Alb-Wednesday and the following Lent, these Men can perform the Work of Repentance to any purpose? When they come reaking from their Balls and Gambols, are they fit

fit for serious and sober Meditations, which are the great Instruments of Repentance? It is hard to credit this, and yet several Countries practice this Folly, and imagine that they are Mafters of great Devotion and Penitence. But I defire you to consider what a weighty Work Repentance is, how ferious and folemn we ought to be even in our Preparations to it, and such are Meditation and Reflection. It is a business of a high nature to rifle your Hearts and Lives, to fearch into your Consciences and Manners. And this is the thing which I now commend unto you. If you would be true Evangelical Penitents, it is absolutely required of you that you take some Time to examine your felves, and to confider what you have done, and what will be the iffue of it. This is the way to be convinced throughly of your Sins, and to come to a fense not only of your Guilt, but of your Danger. Hereby you will be brought to mourn and lament, and to grieve most heartily for your Sins which have plunged you into a miserable State.

aly, After you have thus confider'd your ways, and your Consciences are really convinced, and you find your felves both guilty of Sin, and obnoxious to a Curfe, it now follows that you be throughly fensible of this, that you are not able by your own Strength to relieve and recover your felves, and to escape that Misery which you have involved your felves in. You must know assuredly that you can do nothing merely of your felves; you are shiftless and helpless Persons; you can undo and destroy your selves, but you can't fave and recover your selves. When you have reflected on your ways, you must be self-condemned, and you must look on your selves as those who are also cast

Thus we must arrive to this Perswasion, that there is no ground of Hope in our selves, nor in any other Creature. There is nothing in us, or in them, to free and deliver us. We must attain to this Belief and Sentiment, before we can pass

rance, and rescue me from the Wrath of the in-

cenfed God.

on Methodically to the Work of Gospel Repentance. We must disown all Help which comes, or can come from any Finite Being. We must banish all Pride and Self-conceit. We must exercise Humility and Self-abasement; and having cast our felves down, we may then lift up our Eyes, and utter our Penitential Thoughts in such Language as this; We have committed Iniquity, and rebelled by departing from thy Precepts, O Lord. Unto thee belongeth Righteousness, but unto us Shame and Confusion: Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly. We have finned against thee our merciful Father, and are no more worthy to be called thy Children, no not thy Creatures. We are unworthy to look up to Heaven, the Place where thy Honour dwelleth. We are unworthy to fend up a Sigh thither, to implore Mercy and Forgiveness; but seeing thou hast been pleased to invite Sinners to come to thee, we know it is not in vain to approach thy Throne, and humbly to crave Relief.

4ly. then, The Soul being fensible of its Inability to help it felf, it begins to be apprehenfive of that Help and Relief which are offer'd in the Gospel. It breaths out its Hopes in such Words as these, Lord, there is Mercy with thee, and with thee is Pardon and Forgiveness: Unto whom should I sly, but unto thee? Whither should such a poor worthless Creature repair, but unto the Father of Mercy? Though I deserve nothing but Death and Damnation, yet I hope to find Help and Deliverance in that Bleffed Redeemer, who came to feek and fave those that are loft. I cast my self at his Feet, and if I perish, I perish. Thus the distressed Soul debafing and dejecting it felf, and being broken and wounded.

wounded, is desirous to be cur'd and heal'd. Being weary and heavy laden, and fenfible of its forlorn Condition, and throughly humbl'd in the Sense of it, it looks after a Remedy, it entertains Hopes of Relief; and, Where can it find it but in the Gospel? Where is it to be had, but in Christ lefus, who hath died and fatisfied for Sinners? Hence follows directly an earnest Defire of Grace, a hungring and thirsting after Righteousness, an incessant Longing for the Comforts of the Holy Spirit: For as the Soul was convine'd of its own Emptiness (as you have heard before) so now it apprehends the Fulness that is in Christ: It beholds the All-sufficiency that is in him, and therefore the Necessity of applying to him. This works the Soul to Repentance, this doth it when all o-

ther Things are not able to effect it.

For look as it is in the Change of the Earth, all the Severities of the Winter, although they cast it into various Forms, have not Power to make it fruitful; but when the Sun with its warmer Influence approacheth, the heavy Clods of Earth feel a wonderful enlivening, and all the Vegetables in her Bosom receive a new Life and Activity: Answerably it is with our Hearts, which feeling the Rigour and Severity of the Law, are indeed, in some Manner changed, they undetgo some Alterations; but these are not able to produce a kindly Repentance in the Soul. This must be done by the milder Influence of God's Love and Mercy, in Christ Jesus the Sun of Righteousness, whereby the Heart is softned and melted, and as it were dissolves itself into Penitential Tears. When the Soul confiders the Loving Invitations of the Bleffed Jesus, and heareth him protest that he will in no wife cast those off who

who come unto him, and that there is Joy in Heaven when a Sinner repenteth; when the Soul, I say, hears and considers this, it takes up sted-fast Resolves of turning to God, and forsaking all its Sins. When the distressed Sinner sees the Free Grace and Mercy of God the Father, in his Son Jesus; when the Soul beholds this Willingness to pity and pardon, then upon this Foundation it betakes itself to Repentance, and performs this

Task with great Success.

5ly, The Sinner dwells on the Thoughts of Christ's Sufferings, and thereby effectually promotes his Repentance. Remember then the great and exceffive Sorrows which our Lord under-went for thy Sins: Remember them frequently, and they will certainly further thy Sorrow and Grief. Thou who hearest this Doctrine of Repentance preach'd to thee, and art enclin'd to make an Essay of it, forget not to make use of this Help (among others) which I now tender to thee: Think how Christ groan'd for thy Sins, think how he was buffeted, affronted, reproach'd for thy Sins; yea, how he shed his Blood, and suffer'd Death for thy Sins. Did thy Sins cost Christ so dear, and wilt thou not think of leaving them? Did he pour forth his Blood, and wilt not thou shed Tears for thy Sins? Did he cry out upon the Cross by reafon of them, and shalt not thou be heard to lament and bewail them? Yea, Wilt thou crucify the Lord again, by thy obstinate persisting in thy Sins without Repentance? Seriously meditate on those unspeakable Torments which our Saviour endur'd. Reflect on that shameful and curs'd Death, which our Sins brought upon him: How being under the Sense of his Father's Wrath, he cried out upon the Cross, My God, My God, Why bast thou for saken me? And hence learn to for sake your Sins, which were the Cause of that dreadful Ontery. That the Consideration of the Sufferings of Christ, is a powerful Help to godly Sorrow and Contrition, is intimated to us in Zech. 12. 10. where God promising the Grace of Repentance to his People, presents to their Eyes the Sufferings of Christ, [they shall look on him who they have piere'd.] Then, as it follows, they shall mourn, and be in Heaviness. This will work in them a kindly Sorrow for their Sins; for nothing can render their Sins more odious and detestable, than the serious

Meditation on Christ's bitter Passion.

Do thy Sins then lie light on thy Soul? Think what a heavy Burden they were to Christ when they made him sweat Blood, and afterwards cry out with fo tremendous a Voice upon the Cross. Dreamest thou of Pleasure in thy Sins? Let the Thoughts of Christ's unspeakable Sorrows and Pains remove that fond Fancy and Delusion, He gave his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair; he hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting, Isaiah 50. 6. His Visage was marr'd more than any Man's, his Form more than the Sons of Men, Isaiah 52. 14. Let us proceed a little further with that Evangelical Prophet, in Chap. 53. 2. Co. [ He hath no Form nor Comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we sould defire him. He is despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, and we hid as it were our Faces from him: He was despised, and we e-Reemed bim not: Surely he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, yet we did esteem him smitten of God and afflitted.] The fulfilling of this Prophecy in all its Circumstances, is declar'd at large in the History of the Gospel. There we read how the

only begotten Son of God, our Bleffed Redeemer, was a Man of Sorrows, and despised and rejected of Men, how he was traduc'd and flander'd. voted for a Glutton and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, one that cast out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils. We read there how he was betray'd by one of his own Difciples, and Domestick Servants, how he was spit upon, mock'd and derided, impeach'd of Blasphemy and Treason, scourg'd and whip'd, condemn'd and crucify'd, and that in the midst of two Notorious Thieves, as if he were the greater Malefactor. There you read how they shook their Heads at this Patient Sufferer, how they mock'd and revil'd him in his greatest Pains and Agonies; how they gave him Gall and Vinegar to drink, how they pierc'd his Side, and dug thro' the Passages and Avenues that lead to his very Heart, and thence drew forth his precious Blood. Yea, He was not only afflicted of Men, but in some fort forsaken of God: as we are acquainted by that dreadful Groan, and hideous Out-cry on the Cross. And now methinks Christ speaks to us in the Words of the Prophet Feremy, Lam. 1. 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce Anger. Is it nothing to you? Yes, It concerns you all. Tour Sins have procured all this; your Sins have deformed, grieved, smitten, persecuted, wounded, crucified the Holy Jesus. The Lord shew us this Day the Odiousness of our Sins in the Bitterness of Christ's Passion.

If we be moved and affected when we read how unworthily and basely Judas betray'd our Saviour,

our, how despitefully the Jews dealt with him; if with disdain we remember their loud Cry, Crueify Him, Crucify Him; if when we read how unjustly Pilate condemn'd him, how cruelly and inhumanely the Soldiers treated him, what an ignominious and painful Death his Enemies inflicted on him; we cannot but condemn those wicked Miscreants, and stand amaz'd at their bold and daring Folly; and are ready to profess, that we would not have had a Hand in fo favage an Act for all the World; if we be thus affected, How much more ought we to be concern'd, when we remember that this Jesus ascended that fatal Tree for our fakes; and that they were our Sins which caufed those unexpressible Sorrows and Sufferings? And, 'Gan we then take Pleasure in those Sins? Nay, Is it possible to reflect on them, and not to be very angry with our felves for them? Do we not perceive the odious and horrid Nature of them? Do not the Sufferings of Christ render all Sins detestable and abominable? And if they do fo, furely we must be stir'd up essectually to forfake our Sins, and to shew our selves godly Penitents. I pray God the scrious Medication of our Saviour's Sufferings for us, may have this hapby Influence upon us.

of the Gespel, and he will find this to be a marvellous Help to true Repentance. He no sooner lays hold on those great and precious Promises, but he hastneth his turning unto God. How this don't, I will shew you briefly in these three Particulars, 1. The Sinner is unwilling to quit his evil Ways, because they are accompanied with sensual Pleasure, Profit and Advantage. Now the Promises of the Gospel help us here, because they make

make us undervalue the Things of this World, by offering to us, and affaring us, of greater and higher Things. They fet before us the Joys of Heaven, and the Rewards of righteous Souls, which if duly confider'd, will wean us from this World, and enable us to despise and trample on all Things here below, and afpire after Happinels above. 2. The Sinner is conscious to himself of his past Offences, and is afraid that he shall be wholly excluded from Mercy and Pardon, and this hinders, or retards his Repentance; for he thinks his Repentance will not be accepted: But then when he represents to his Thoughts the gracious Promises of Reconciliation and Forgiveness, he is encourag'd thereby to abandon his Sins, and to renounce his evil Life, and to beg Remission of his Sins, for the Sake and Merits of that lefus who came into the World on this very Delign, namely, to fave Sinners. 3. When the Sinner hath made some Attempts of Repentance, and hath met with some Difficulties in that Enterprize, and finds himself unable to go through that great Work, then he fits down and desponds; he is discourag'd from going any further, yea, he hath Thoughts of going back, that is, of returning to his former Sins and vicious Practices; but the Promises of the Gospel help and relieve him in this Case: They acquaint him that he shall have Power and Strength from Above, to undertake and perform his Duty: God's Grace shall be Inflicient for him; he shall be strengthen'd with Might in the inner Man; he wall run and not faint; he hall increase Strength; he hall do all Things through Christ who strengthens him. Hereupon the Soul is unspeakably chear'd and comforted, and relies on the Affistance and Aid of Heaven, and sets it self TELLIE Y X 2 again

again in good earnest to discharge its Duty, and defies all Difficulties, and makes its way through all Hardships. Thus you see how Repentance is further'd and promoted by the Consideration of the Promifes. Wherefore, that you may compleat the Work of Evangelical Repentance, you must look up to Chrift, and lay hold on him by Faith, and claim the precious Promifes of the Gospel. And thus Faith and Repentance are join'd together; thus thefe two Graces help and promote one another, and more particularly (which is the thing I am now speaking of) Faith advances and promotes Repentance. By believing and imbracing the Promises we do marvellously set forward, vea, finish the important Task of Repentance. Hereby we come to embrace the Laws of Christ, and to submit heartily to them, and to mortify our Lufts, and to vanquish the whole Body of Sin, and to conform our Lives to the Precepts of the Gofpet. 10 change of and a supply of the

And thus I have fet before you the way, process and order of our turning unto God. I have let you fee what is the Method of Conversion and Repentance. I hope some of you can experimentally attest the Truth and Reality of these Things that I have faid. I hope you have actually found that this is the true Scheme of Conversion. And as for those of you that have not yet had Experience of these Things, I beleech you that you would now feriously lay to Heart what I have offer'd to you. When you go from this Place, Retire, and confider your State and Condition, examine your Hearts and Lives; deal impartially with yourselves, discover your Guilt and your Danger: And when you have done so, see your own inability to help and relieve yourselves. But withal,

withal, shut not your Eyes at that Blessed Help and Remedy which is set before you. View the great and precious Promises of the Gospel which are made to penitent Sinners. I beg of you that you would seriously set yourselves to the observing of this Way and Method, and I question not but it will prove successful to you.

7ly, I am in the next place to propound unto you the outward Means, Helps and Instruments of

Repentance, and they are such as these:

1. Devout and earnest Prayer. You must conscientiously make use of this in order to the attaining a deep Remorfe for your Sins, a Hatred of them, and a firm purpole to forfake them. A broken and a contrite Heart are call'd the Sacrifice of God, Pfal. 51. 17. not only because he commands them, but because he works them in us. He that is the Searcher of Hearts is the Changer of them, He only can soften and melt them; it is his Prerogative alone to do it. Therefore be diligent and constant in Prayer unto him, that he would effect this great Work in you. Pray unto God for Conversion, according to that Pattern in Jer. 31. 18. Turn thou me, and I shall be turn'd; for thou art the Lord my God; thou only canst accomplish this Work; be pleased therefore to work this blessed Work for us. It is God that must open our Hearts, as he did the Heart of Lydia. And Prayer (if I may so speak with Reverence) is the Key to open God's Heart, to prevail with him to extend his Compassion towards us, and to bless us in turning us from our Iniquities. Apply therefore to this compassionate Lord, and humbly intreat him to affect thy Heart with the Vileness and Wretchedness of thy Nature, that he would aware hee out of thy carnal Security. In thy Supplements

at the Throne of Grace breath forth thy Soul in fuch Language as this, O how vile a Sinner am I? What a monstrous Creature? I have been in Rebellion against my Maker; I have misimployed my Being against him that gave it me; I have provoked a Loving Father: I have perfifted in my Follies against the Kindness of a Saviour and Redeemer; I have grieved the Holy Spirit of Grace, and thall I not after all this find myself struck with bitter Grief and Remorfe? What shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of Men? What shall I say unto thee, O thou Lover of Souls? How shall I stand before thee, O thou Blessed Comforter? When shall I appear? Whither shall I sty? Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head; as a heavy Burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. I have roared by reason of the Disquietness of my Heart. Lord, all my Desire is before thee, and my Groaning is not hid from thee. In thee, O Lord, do I hope, thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. I will declare mine Iniquity, I will be forry for my Sins. The remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the burden of them is intolerable. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death, this unfufferable Load of Corruption, this Mass of Sin and Vice? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. O Blessed Jesus, vouchsafe to receive me; O merciful Lord, difdain not to accept of a broken Spirit. Despile not this contrite Heart which I now offer to thee, but do thou still increase my Sorrow for my Offences; let it proceed to so high a degree that it may produce in me a hearty Derestation of all my Evil Ways, and bring forth all the

Fruits of a fincere Repentance in my Life.

In this or the like manner, you may offer up your Addresses unto God: You need not be much follicitous about Words; only take care of this, that your Expressions be the Language of your Hearts, and that is enough. And in your Prayers be mindful likewise to plead the precious Promises made to those especially who live under the gracious Dispensation of the Gospel. Such are those in Ezek. 36. 26, 27. A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you a Heart of Flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them. Beg, humbly beg this new Spirit, this soft Heart, whereby you may give Proof of your fincere Sorrow and Repentance by your walking in the Statutes of God, and keeping his Judgments. Be often upon your Knees, and repeat this Request frequently, and with all Earnestness and Importunity, and you cannot fail.

2. Conversion and Repentance are wrought by a diligent Reading the Word of God. This is another Means which you must Conscientiously make use of. The Psalmist acquaints you, that the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, Psalm 19.7. And certainly its Excellency and Perfection cannot be discovered in any thing more than this, that Souls are converted by it. There were two Books which this Holy Man was much versed in; the first is that of the Creatures, the Workmanship of God's Creation. This he speaks of from the 1st Ver. of this Psalm to the 7th, The Heavens declare the Glory of God, &c. The second Book is that of the

the Law, mention'd by the Pfalmist in the 7th Verse, and the rest that follow. This he chiefly studied, and he tells you the excellent Property of it, it convertes the Soul. And you may find the same Essect of it, by conversing with God's Law, i. e. by perusing and studying the Precepts and Commands, the Invitations and Calls, the Threatnings and Curses, and lastly, the Gracious Promises contain'd in the Word of God, you may be made sensible of your Sins, you may be humbled for them, you may essectually be brought to a Godly Sorrow and Repentance for them. Thus the

Law of the Lord converteth the Soul.

And the same Holy Psalmist suggests as much in Pfal. 119.9. Wherewithal shall a young Man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereunto according to thy Word. It was Aristotle's Opinion, that Young Men are not fit Auditors of Moral Philosophy; but a greater than Aristotle tells us here, that they are capable of the Moral Precepts of the Law, and that their best way to cleanse and correct their Evil Manners, is to attend to these Commands and Injunctions which are prescribed them in God's Word. The Scriptures even of the Old Testament (for of that only we are to understand this Text) is sufficient to inform Mens Minds, and instruct them in their Duty, so far as it refers to Moral Practife. Thy Word is a Light unto my Feet, said the same Holy Man; a Light to direct me in the Way wherein I should walk; a Light to discover the Secrets of my Heart, to lay open my inward Corruptions, and give me a perfect view of them. God's Law is resembled to a Mirrour or Looking-glass, Jam. 1. 23. namely, because it shews us what we are; it makes a full Discovery of all the Spots and Blemishes of our Souls.

A perfect Discovery of our State may be gain'd (and indeed can be gain'd no otherwise than) by our consulting the Scriptures of Truth. These are fitted for this very purpole, viz. to give us a true and impartial Sight of ourselves, of our Errors and Miscarriages. The Reason then why Men are not acquainted with their Deformities is, because they look not into this Glass, or look carelefly and negligently, and then 'tis impossible there should be a true and perfect representation of their Features. Some will not look into this Glass, lest they should be asham'd of themselves. when they see how foul they are. Others, if they look into it, do what they can to stain and fully it, that it may not truly represent them to themfelves; they endeavour to darken this pure Mirrour of God's Word, and with their false Glosses to corrupt the Holy Commandments. Or elfe, they labour to soil their Consciences, and to render them unable to represent their Deformities and Pollutions to them. Thus Men grow ignorant of themselves, and insensible of their Sins; instead of condemning their evil Courses they excuse and justify them, not enquiring into the Law of God, and comparing their Lives with it, which is one principal thing that must be done in order to Conversion and Repentance. You cannot then be ignorant of your Duty in this particular: If you are desirous to further these, you must frequently take the Book of God into your Hands, and peruse it with great Care. This is not like other Books; it was particularly defign'd by God to be a Means of Conversion; and therefore if you apply your felves to it with Attention and Diligence, you may expect the happy Success.

## A Treatise of Repentance. 214

Let the Examples of those who have been converted by Reading the Holy Scriptures be your Encouragement. The Æthiopian Eunuch owed the great Change which was made in him to his Reading the Prophet Ilaiah, Acts 8, 27, Oc. In fucceeding Times we have many Instances: Thus Tarianus, an Antient Worthy in the Christian Church (though he afterwards had great Failings) gives us this Account of his Conversion to Chriflianity: " I happen'd, saith he, to light on cer-" tain barbarous Writings, which were antienter " by far than any Writings among the Greeks : " And as they were confiderable for their Anti-" quity, fo I found they were peculiar and extra-" ordinary as to their Stile and Phrase, which " were no ways affected, but what was said was " plainly propounded; and there feem'd to be no " finister Design in them, as is in many other " Writings; yea, Future Events were foretold in "them, and the accomplishment of them proves " them to be true : Whereupon I gave Credit to " them, and I embrac'd the Doctrine which they " deliver. Thus this Wife Heathen was induced to own the Christian Religion, by perusing the Scriptures. Theophilus of Antioch, another Learned Gentile, was converted to the Christian Faith by perusing even the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as he relates him-

\* Emuzin iseals felf\*, "Lighting, saith he, uptolycum, Lib. r. "Holy Prophets, I came to " be convinced of the Errors

"I then liv'd in, I renounc'd my Superstition, " and embrac'd the Religion of the Christians. Hilary, a Famous Latin Father, gives this Ac-

+ Incidi in cos li-

bros quos à Mose atque à Prophetis scrip-

tos effe Hebræorum

Religio tradebat, in

quibus, &c.

count of his Conversion to Christianity \*, " After

initio.

"I had confider'd, faith he, \* De Trinitate; sub

" the Vanity and Absurdities " of the Gentile Religion and

"Worship, † at length I hap-

" pen'd to meet with those

"Books which the Jewish "Church reports to have been

" written by Moses and the

" Prophets. In these I disco-

" ver'd the True Religion; these brought me to the acknowledgment of the Messias, and to

"own the Best Religion in the World. I could mention that Egyptian Hermite, (for so he was afterwards) who was converted to the Christian Faith by hearing the Scrip-

tures read in the Family he | De Doarina Christ. was in, as St. Augustine | re- Lib. 1.

lates.

But as I have given you some Examples of fuch as have quitted Heathenism, and have been brought to an outward acknowledging and profeffing of Christianity, so I will now present you with some Instances of those Persons who profeffing and owning the Christian Religion, were throughly wrought upon, and had their Hearts changed by Reading the Scriptures, and came to a full Sight of their Sins. The Story of Origen (that Famous Light of the Church) is worth your taking notice of; and I mention'd some part of it before. He had openly professed the Christian Faith at Alexandria, and had defended the Caufe of Religion by his Eminent Discourses, but living in the Time of Persecution, he was required to submit to the Heathen Idolatry, if he intended to be exempted from Punishment and Tortures.

Hereupon he was tempted to offer Incense to an Idol, and he complied with the Temptation: When he had done this, he was Excommunicated by the Church of Alexandria, and he went into Judea, and being there he was defired to preach to the Christians, accordingly he open'd his Bible, and the first Place he cast his Eve upon, was Pfalm 50. 16, 17. Unto the Wicked God faith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy Mouth? Seeing thou batest Instruction, and castest my Words behind thee. As foon as he had perused this Text, he shut up his Book, and instead of Preaching fell a Weeping. Tears were his only Sermon: For he reflected on what he had done; how he had fhamefully offended God, and scandaliz'd Religion, by complying with an Idolatrous Practice; and how unworthy he was to preach to others, who had been so guilty himself. The reading of that, the forementioned Place of Scripture, was the Occafion of this Change in him; and he threw himfelf down at the Church-Porch, and defired the People to tread him under their Feet, and to trample on him as unfavoury Salt. In brief, Nothing was more instrumental to forward his compleat Conversion, than this reading of that Text of Scripture.

St. Augustin's Conversion was mightily advanc'd by the Tolle, Lege, Take up and Read, which he heard in a Garden where he was. This, (as he \* saith himself) he look'd upon as an Admiration from Heaven, to take up the Holy Scripture (which he then had with him) and read it. And the first Place which he lighted on, was Rom. 13. 13, 14. [Let us walk honestly, as in the Day, not in Rioting

and

and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envying; but put ye on the Lord Jefus Christ, and make not Provision for the Flesh, to
fulfil the Lusts thereof. At the reading of which
Words, he was so wonderfully wrought upon,
and so fully resolv'd to forsake the Vanities of the
World, and to become a new Man, that he immediately repair'd to St. Ambrose, who was then
Bishop of Milan, and was baptized by him.

But to proceed to some Modern Examples, Thomas Bilney, who was a Martyr in King Henry the Eighth's Days, was first converted by serious-· ly reading I Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to fave Sinners, of whom I am chief. The deliberate meditating on this prov'd effectual towards the amending of his Life, and caufing him to lay hold on the Divine Mercy, offer'd to Sinners by Jesus Christ. To mention a Foreign Instance, Junius, who afterwards prov'd an Eminent Servant of God in the Church, was converted by looking into the Scriptures: for his Father had furnish'd every Room with a Bible: But especially the reading and serious studying of the First Chapter of St. John's Gospel, was effectual towards his thorough Change. To come back again to our own Country, I read in Mr. Dod's Life, that that Text of Scripture, Rom. 7. 14. We know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, fold under Sin, wrought exceedingly on that Person first of all, for his Conversion and Repentance. Shall I need then to expatiate any further on this Head of my Discourse, and to request you to peruse the Holy Bible, and to be very conversant in it? If you heartily desire to repent, make use of this Means. And in your reading the Bible, observe

observe these three Rules, 1. Pray unto God to open your Eyes, to behold the facred Truths contain'd in it, and to affect your Hearts and Consciences with them. 2. Be very constant in perufing this Holy Volume; for Frequency will beget a Delight in them. 3. Read with Reverence and godly Fear, read it as the Book of God, as that Book whereby you shall be judg'd at the last Day. Thus remember to perform this Duty aright; and if you do so, you will be fuccessful in your Undertaking. Whatever other Writings vou neglect, forget not to study these. You can spare Time for your Pleasures, your Recreations, your worldly Bufmess; remember to set some Hours apart for the perusing this Sacred Volume. Those of you that can't read, procure some Neighbour or Friend to read the Scriptures to you. Know affuredly, That the reading of the Bible will be wonderfully useful to enlighten your Minds, to convince voir Consciences, to make you sensible of your Sins, and to bring you to True Repentance.

3. Make use of the Preaching of the Word, as an other Means of Conversion and Repentance. Perswade your selves of this, that the Faithful Dispensing of the Word, is the ordinary and appointed Instrument for the Working of Compunction and Remorse, with a godly Sorrow, and an entire Turning unto God. We read what esset the Discourses and Orations, even of some Pagan Philosophers, and other Eminent Men among them, have had on their Hearers; how they strangely moved and stir'd them; how marvellously they wrought upon them: And shall not those whom God hath appointed to instruct the World, to inform Men's Minds, and to reclaim them from Vice and Wickedness; Shall not these Persons, I

fay, experience that their Sermons and Discourses are attended with a far greater Vertue and Efficacy? Shall not the Preaching of the Word, shall not the Ministry of the Servants of the Most High, be much more powerful and operative, then the Harangues of common Orators, and the Arguments and Discourses of Philosophers? Yes, The marvellous Power of the Divine Ministry, in proclaiming the Will and Pleasure of God to Mankind, hath in all Ages proved efficacious, and hath chang'd Men's Hearts and Lives, and hath been productive of sincere Repentance. Personal Application and Denunciations made by God's Prophets, What have they not effected? For the Proof of which, I defire you to call to mind how Nathan address'd himself to King David; how the Prophet Jonas dealt with the Ninevites; but I'm chiefly concern'd at present to speak of the Efficacy of the Preaching of the Gospel, because this, in a more signal and eminent Manner, is the Means of Conversion and Repentance. To begin with the Forerunner and Harbinger of our Bleffed Saviour, it was intended, That his Preaching should be for this great End, (as it was foretold concerning him, by the Prophet Malachi) to turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children. and the Hearts of the Children to the Fathers; that is, To work a Change on Men's Hearts, to reconcile Men to God, and to one another. And accordingly the Evangelical History relates, That by the Ministry of this first Preacher of the Gofpel, this happy Effect of it was visible. Many flock'd to him, and liftned to his Doctrine, the Doctrine of Repentance, (which I have been fo long infifting upon) and this Doctrine had a mighty Influence upon them, and they came and were

were baptized, confessing their Sins, as you read in the third Chapter of St. Matthew. Thus the first Fruits of Conversion and Repentance, were by this Holy Man's Preaching. And ever afterwards the same Instrument, I mean Preaching of the Word, was made use of to that excellent End. How was St. Paul converted? In an extraordinary Manner, you will say, (and I shall indeed offer him as one Instance of extraordinary Conversion afterwards) but though 'tis true, That his Conversion began extraordinarily, yet it was sully effected and compleated by Preaching. This is clear from that notable Passage recorded in the nineteenth of the AEIs, where you read that Ananias was appointed to teach and instruct him.

Christ who spoke to Paul from Heaven, might have effectually compleated this Work of his Conversion; or Angels might have been partly employ'd, as in the Instance of Cornelius; (of which I shall speak anon) but instead of this, Christ sends Ananias, an Apostolical Person, and Minister of Jesus, to him, who surther enlightned and instructed him, and so the Work of Conversion

was finish'd.

And as the Ministry of Man was made use of in St. Paul's Conversion; so when he was commission'd to preach, this was the Design and Purpose of that Office, (as he declares himself, in his Apology before Agrippa) to open Men's Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light; and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins; the very same Doctrine which the Text before us sets forth, Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. I might observe here, That Conversion could not be better express'd than in those Terms, To open Men's Eyes,

Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light; for unregenerate and unconverted Persons are blind, and Darkness doth well express the State of such Men: But God is pleased to make use of the Ministry of the Gospel, for the opening of Men's Eyes, and freeing them from that Darkness which they lie under. The Apostle tells us, in 2 Cor. 4. Gc. That the God of this World, (that is, Satan who is worship'd and serv'd by the Men of this World) hath blinded the Minds of them who believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them. There is the Darkness and Blindness of unconverted Persons. Now obferve how these are to be dispel'd and done away, viz. By the Preaching of the Gospel, as it follows in the next Words, We preach not our felves, but Jesus Christ: for God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, (that is, at the first Creation of all Things) bath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ. And that he shines in the Hearts of those that are converted, by the Preaching of the Word, is evident, not only from the Verse foregoing, which I have mention'd already, but from the Words which follow, We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of m: This Treasure of the Gospel Ministry is committed to Men that are of the same Mould, and like Passions with our felves, that the infinite Power of God may be the more magnify'd and extoll'd; you are call'd to Repentance by weak and finful Men, that the Divine Strength, (the shining mention'd before) may be the more conspicuous and manifest. Marie to the control of the second of the

I will here produce the Instance of Cornelius's Conversion, Acts 10. who was educated a Gentile, but yet was one of the better Sort of them: Afterwards he became a Profelite, and forfook the Heathen Idolatry and Superstition, and obtain'd to some Measure of True Religion and Devotion, and was sensible that Prayers and Alms were acceptable to God, and therefore he is stiled a devout Man, which was the usual Epithet which was given to this fort of Profelites; but yet he was far short of the right Way of Worship, and had not embraced him who was the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. Now, That Angel who appear'd unto him, could have instructed him in that Way, and taught him the Truth as it is in Jesus; but, instead of this, you read that the Angel order'd him to fend for Peter, to be instructed, inform'd, and directed by him, v. s. Send Men to Toppa, and call for one Simon, whose Sirname is Peter; be shall tell thee what thou oughtest to de. And accordingly Peter came to him, and preached Christ unto him, and all his Company, as you read in v. 34. Oc. and what was the happy Effect of this Preaching, you may fatisfy your felves from the Close of the Chapter, where we are told that they embrac'd the Christian Faith, and were endu'd with the Holy Ghost, and were admitted into the Church by Baptism.

And there are diverse other Eminent Instances of the Conversion of Souls, by the Preaching of the Word: In Asts 8. 29. you find that the Conversion of the Eunuch was effected by Preaching, no less than Reading; namely, when Philip expounded the Prophecy of Isaiah to him. So Lydia was made a Convert by St. Paul's Preach-

ing, as you may inform your felves in Acts

16. 14.

I will mention only one Instance more, and that is. That famous Conversion recorded in Acts 2.41. viz. The Conversion of three thousand Souls by the Preaching of St. Peter. You may remember that the great Draught of Fishes, which St. Peter took, is recorded by the Evangelist; as also what our Saviour said on that Occasion, is set down by him, From henceforth thou shalt catch Men, Luke 5. 10. Thou shalt be a Fisher of Men, and thou shalt be successful in that Undertaking. Thou shalt gain many Souls; a Proof of which we have in this great Shole of Converts, no less than three thousand Souls. This plain and impartial Preacher, told them roundly of their heinous Enormities, particularly he reminded them that they were the Seed of Murderers; that though they had not imbru'd their own Hands in Christ's Blood, yet they were the Off-foring of those vile Wretches who had done so; and that they themfelves own'd and defended that horrid Fact, and perfilted in the Malice and Cruelty of their Fathers: When they heard this, they were prick'd at the Heart, and cried, Men and Brethren, What shall we do to be faved? Now truly St. Peter, more defervedly than Pericles the great Grecian Orator, might be faid to leave Stings in the Minds of his Anditors: His Sermon was ibarp and cutting; and pierced their very Souls. The Spear which was struck into Christ's Heart, seemed to be thrust into theirs. Be perswaded then of this grand Truth, That the plain and practical Preaching of the Word, is the true Means whereby we may be brought to Gospel-Compunction. The Sword of the Spirit, is the fittest Weapon to wound Men's Hearts.

Let me present you with a few remarkable Instances: It is true, several Things concur'd to the Conversion and Repentance of that Person, who afterwards prov'd an Eminent Light of the Church, and a worthy Writer and Preacher, I mean St. Augustine; but that which I am to remind you of now, is, That this very Person found the Preaching of the Word (no less than the Reading of it) to be a great Help to Conversion; for he tells us, (in the forecited Book) That one chief Means, whereby he was turn'd from his former Course of Life, was the Preaching of that worthy Man, Ambrose Bishop of Milan. And 'tis the more considerable, because Augustine (at that Time a wanton vicious young Man) went to hear Ambrose, with a Design to cavil at his Doctrine: He wou'd be his Auditor, only to find to object against him; but (as Erasmus wittily said of that Preacher, grandem illum Cetum in Ecclefia Sagenam pertraxit) he drew this great unruly Whale (meaning Augustine) into the Net of the Church. Thus this Pious Father, was a true Fisher of Men, and he catch'd Augustine when he came to catch and carp at him: Such is the Vertue of the Preaching of God's Word.

And as this Person sound Preaching effectual to his own Conversion; so God made use of his Preaching to convert and reclaim others. One Instance Instance I will mention, and it is a very remarkable one; \* This good Father, once in his Sermon, forgot the Argument which he first proposed to prosecute, gustini.

and thereupon being at a Lofs, he fell on the Confutation of the Manichees (which was a Subject it seems which he could never fail of,) and Behold! A rich Merchant, of that erroneous Perswasion, (one Firmus by Name) was convinc'd of his Error, and was turn'd to the Orthodox Faith by that very Discourse; a Discourse which feem'd to be as it were by Chance, and was occasion'd only by that good Father's Forgetfulness. But you see the very Digression, and Impertinency (as some may call it) of this godly Preacher, was instrumental to that Man's owning the Truth, and abandoning a lewd and scandalous Herefy. I might mention (out of Mr. Fox) how Dr. Sands, and Mr. Bradford, in Prison converted their Jailor (one Bowler, a perverse Papist) by their Preaching in that Confinement. You may read in Archbishop Usher's Life, That that Eminent Man's Conversion was partly effected by reading St. Augustin's Meditations; but more signally by a Sermon which he heard Preach'd on Rom. 12. 1, 2. I befeech you Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a Living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable Service; and be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your Minds. These are a few Instances out of many, which I could offer to you on this Subject; but I hope there are some here, who are Examples themfelves of this very thing. I doubt not but some of you can attest the Truth of this, That by the Preaching of the Word, you were first startled

and allarm'd; your Eyes were opened, your Hearts softned, and your Lives amended; and consequently, That the diligent Hearing of God's Word, is the ordinary Instrument to work Conversion in the Souls of Men; it is the usual and appointed Means of Repentance: And as for you who have not found this Effect of Hearing the Word preach'd, it is high Time that you now have the Experience of it. The Word hath been preach'd unto you this Day: You have one Sermon more to answer for, I pray think of it serioully, and do not deceive your own Souls; for that is the worst Cheat in the World. When you return Home, reflect and meditate on what you have heard; endeavour to find experimentally the Influence of this Discourse, and all the foregoing Ones upon your Hearts and Lives. I know, God can reclaim Sinners without the Preaching of the Word. Some have been call'd and converted at first by other Means, of which I shall give you feveral Instances afterwards; but let me tell you this (and I have often told it you already) That Preaching is the usual and ordinary Means of Conversion and Repentance; and therefore if we neglect this, we can't reasonably expect any other: Yea, If any other should be vouchsafed to us, it may prove ineffectual, if we continue in our flighting and difregarding the Ministry of the Word. Befure then, that you make use of this. Draw near to God in the Assemblies of his Peo-After you have most heartily and devoutly joyn'd with the Prayers of the Church, hearken diligently and attentively unto the Message which comes from Heaven, though it be deliver'd to you by Men on Earth. Look not upon Preach-

ing as the Ordinance of Man, and a Thing only

of humane Invention; but be affur'd that 'tis the Appointment of the great God; and therefore expect great Things from it, and lay hold on all Opportunities of being present at the Publick Dispensing of the Word. If you are not wrought upon at one Time, you may be at another. If one Opportunity prove successless, yet the next may not. Therefore improve all Seasons; but efpecially think your felves oblig'd to attend on the Preaching of the Word on the Lord's-Day, that folemn Time fet apart for the Worship and Service of God; for the instructing you in the Ways of Righteousness, and building you up not only in Faith but Repentance, and all Graces of the Holy Spirit. Prize this Day above all others, and do not (as too many in this Nation, yea, in this Town are wont to do) sleep away this Day, or walk or ride it away, or eat and drink it away, or by some other improper or unlawful Courses, spend and consume it. If you have any Love to your Souls; if you have any Sense of their Welfare, be not you of this Number; but (which is the Thing I am now particularly speaking of, and urging upon you) be diligent Hearers of God's Word. Perswade your selves throughly of this, That the Dispensing of that Word, by God's Ministers, is the proper Instrument of Conversion and Repentance; and therefore when you neglect to use it, you neglect the Means of Conversion and Repentance.

It may be expected, That besides Praying, and Reading, and Hearing, I should mention some other Institutions and Ordinances of God, as proper Means of Repentance. As for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the main and principal Use and End of it, is to consirm and strengthen our Graces,

and to increase and advance them. You must repent before you come to this Sacrament, otherwise your Coming is Prophane; but having first repented of your Sins, you may approach to the Table of the Lord, and make this Ordinance a Means of renewing and increasing your Repentance: For certainly it is very useful to that Purpose; because we are here solemnly reminded of the Sufferings and Death of Christ, which are naturally Serviceable to beget Remorse and Sorrow for Sin, and a speedy Resormation of Life. This is all that I will say of this Matter at present.

There is likewise the delightful and excellent

Service of Singing of Pfalms, which may be very useful for softning and melting the Heart, and preparing it for a compleat Change. So Augustine (who I mention'd before) was exceedingly effected and wrought upon by the Pfalmody, used in the great Church at Milan, the like whereof he had never heard in any Place before. When he observ'd with what extraordinary Devotion, and ardent Affection they prais'd God, he thought it represented the Employment of the Blessed Angels, and Glorified Saints in Heaven, who constantly fet forth the Praises of the Most High, and with unwearied Affection extol his Name. This made him reflect on the Folly of his mispent Life, and to bewail it, and to resolve for the future to dedicate himself, and the whole remaining Part of his Life, to the Service of God.

I might mention also Holy Conference, Religious Discourse, keeping Company, with those that are Good and Holy, and such as have had an experimental Knowledge of Conversion; also the perusing and studying the Writings of godly Men, which without question are very Instrumental, through

God's

God's Bleffing, to the converting of Sinners. Of the last of these St. Augustine gives us an Instance in himself, telling us, that his reading and perufing the Life of Anthony the Hermite, who was fam'd for his strict and austere Life, had a great Influence upon him. These therefore are Means that ought to be made use of; and no Man that is careful of his Everlasting Concern, will venture to omit or neglect them. But these are but Assistants to those Things which I have before mentioned, viz. Fervent Prayer, Reading of the Holy Scriptures, and a diligent Hearing of the Word: Therefore I chose to insist and inlarge chiefly on them.

4. To comprehend all that hath been omitted, I advise you to attend unto, observe and improve all the Dispensations of God's Providence in the World, of what kind soever they be; for these are defign'd to lead you to Repentance. There is nothing that happens, nothing that we fee, or hear, or converse with, but may be serviceable to this great Purpose. All the Occurrences in the World may be some ways useful to this End.

First, You must be careful to improve all Seasons and Conditions of Life, for the advancing of your Repentance. These two States and Conditions especially you are to manage aright, namely, Prosperity and Adversity. First, The Kindness and Mercy of God, shew'd in conferring Temporal Blessings upon us, should lead us to Repentance. To this purpose let me desire you to sit down seriously, and call to mind the many and great Mercies (even outward and bodily ones) which you every Day enjoy; reckon them up in order, prefent them distinctly to your Thoughts, and think at the same time how many Persons are deprived

of them, and are heard to make very doleful Complaints, because the Blessings of this Life are taken from them. Think again why these Mercies are continued to you. Certainly for this Reason, viz. that they may be Means of Repentance. God designs to reclaim you by this mild and gentle, this loving and merciful dealing with you. Take care therefore that you mind the Design of Heaven, and that you speedily comply with it, that is, that you

turn unto God by unfeigned Repentance.

But Secondly, The Providence and Dispensation of Heaven are to be regarded also in the Day of Adversity and Affliction. You are more especially obliged to make that Seafon subservient to your Repentance. Observe God's afflicting Hand, hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it. Let God's Chastisements promote thy turning unto him, as we see in the Example of David, Pl. 119. 61. Before I was afflitted I went aftray, but now have I kept thy Word. This is the bleffed Fruit of Afflictions, faith he, that have check'd my wanderings, they have amended my straying steps. I now am enabled to keep thy Laws, and observe thy Commandments, which I could not do before, I can truly fay, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. To instance particularly in Bodily Pain and Sickness, these are made use of by God as instrumental to Repentance and Reformation; and therefore when it shall please God to afflict you in this manner, you ought to improve such a Condition to the great purpose of Amendment of Life. If you will confult the 33d Chapter of Job, (the Chapter which I refer'd you to before) you'll find that God calls Men to Repentance by Bodily Weakness and Sickness. The Man is chastned with Pain upon his Bed,

and the multitude of bis Bones with strong Pain, fo that his Life abhorreth Bread, and his Soul dainty Meat. His Flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his Bones that were not feen flick out. His Soul draweth near to the Grave, and his Life to the Destroyer. This is the Description of some grievous Sickness and Disease. Now, at such a time as this, if God shall be pleas'd by the Ministry of some faithful Messenger and Interpreter (as he is call'd in the next Verse) to shew unto him his Uprightness; that is, to discover to him at such a season the true way to Righteousness, and consequently to Pardon and Forgiveness: If he be thus favour'd by God he is in a happy State, he is in the direct way to Godly Repentance, and all the bleffed Confequences of it, mention'd in the following Verses.

A most Eminent Modern Instance is that of the late Earl of Rochester, who owed his Conversion, through God's Grace, to his last Sickness. After an extream vicious and debauched Life God was pleased to call him and reduce him by a sharp and painful Disease. Hereby the Almighty awaken'd and rouz'd him; by this means his Conscience smote him, his Heart relented, and with great abhorrence he resected on his former Sins, which were of the greatest magnitude: Hereby he was throughly convinced of his past Folly and Madness, and heartily beg'd Pardon, and exerted the most lively Acts of Faith and Reliance on Christ's Merits, and went through all the Parts of a God-

ly and Christian Repentance, as is \* testified by those who were Eye-witnesses and Hearers of it. Thus God makes use of Bodily Pains and Distempers to be a Means to reclaim notorious Sinners.

\* See it fully reprefented in Mr. Robert Parlons's Sermon preached at the Funeral of the E. of Rochester, and in Dr. Burnet's Account of his Life and Death.

And

And other Afflictions and Crosses are manag'd by the same Divine Hand, to the like happy When Manasses was in Prosperity he rebell'd against Heaven, he was one of the greatest Idolaters that History makes mention of: But when he was in Affliction and Bonds, he soon grew sensible of his past Enormities, he confes'd his gross Miscarriages, he sought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and reformed his Life, and became a remarkable Convert and Penitent. It was Affliation and Hardship which made the Prodigal come to himself, i.e. to be sober and considerate, and to return to his Duty and Obedience. His Hunger and Want brought him home to his Father. As some tell us that the unruly Whale (that Sea-Leviathan) never comes to shore till the Harping Irons be flung at her, and she finds herself wounded by them: So fares it with most of the wild and extravagant Sinners; they take their Pastime, they live uncontrolled in their Sins, and they never leave them until the Arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them, and they find themselves wounded and gall'd by his afflicting Hand. Then they quit their finful Pleasures, then they bethink themselves of their great Interest and Concern, and they hasten unto God by hearty Repentance. Remember then to manage the Time of Affliction to this excellent end and purpose. Look up to the Calamities and Distresses which befal you, as Belbazzar did to the Hand-writing on the Wall, and let those have the like Effect on you that this had on him; that is, make you Tremble, and stand in Awe of the Almighty; yea, let them produce a higher and nobler Effect in you, I mean, a broken and contrite Heart, a kindly Remorfe and Repentance, 1017

pentance. Know this, that Afflictions are de-

fign'd for your Conversion and Amendment.

There are other Ways and Methods used by the All-wife God to work upon the Hearts of Men, and to bring them to some sense of their Duty, and to remind them of abandoning their former Errors and Vices. Not only the Reading of the Holy Scriptures, but even of the Writings of Moral Philosophers, hath been serviceable to the enlightning of Men's Minds, and reforming not on-

ly their Notions but their Man-\* Apolog. pro Chriners. \* Justin Martyr acquaints flianis. us, that by Reading of a Sen-

tence in Plato's Works, he took the first Rise of leaving Paganism, and imbra-

+ Confest. Lib. 8. cing Christianity. † St. Austin Cap. 7. acknowledgeth himself that he

was very much helped forward towards the approving of the Christian Faith, and changing his Life, by Reading one of Tully's Dialogues, which was put out in Hortenfius's Name. Gregory Thaumaturgus (as Gregory Nyssen relates of him) was partly converted by means of that Philosophy which

he studied. "This great Man,

" faith | he, being conversant " with much Diligence in the " Writings of Philosophers, by

" which the Greeks maintain and defend their Errors and

"Superstitions, even by those

" very Writings was brought

Ouizas 870 Th Ego pixorogia d' emμελείας καθομιλήσας, δ BY O SAANVIOUS TOIS monhois Behair rai, Sia דצישש הלאקאלא שפיני THE THE XEISTANIOUS XA-TUYONOTY.

" to the Knowledge of Christianity. He saw the Folly and Vanity of their Opinions, and of the different Parties and Sects among them, and thereupon fought out for some stable and sure Doctrine, some Religion and Institution which he could acquiesce

quiesce in, and embrace with satisfaction. Thus a View of a False Religion brought him to own the True one. The Reading of Pagan and Prophane Authors made him have an Esteem for the Holy Scriptures, and heartily to believe them. I

remember \* Mr. Fox tells us, \* Alls and Mon. Vol.2. that many were brought to the Knowledge of the True Reli-

gion, and to a Hatred of Popery and Superstition, by Reading Chaucer's Works. When God thinks fit to enlighten and reclaim Men, he can make any

thing subservient to that purpose.

To proceed then in enumerating the various Methods of God's Providence, which are to be improved for the working of Repentance in us, I cannot but mention to you what Elihu, one of Job's Friends, hath left upon record, Job 33. 14, &c. God Speaketh once, yea, twice, yet Man perceiveth it not. In a Dream, in a Vision of the Night, when deep Sleep falleth upon Men, in Slumberings on the Bed: then he openeth the Ears of Men, and fealeth their Instruction. God speaks to Men often, and this one way, viz. by Dreams and Visions, I mean not here the extraordinary Dreams and Visions which God's Servants had of old, and which are now generally ceas'd, as well as other extraordinary Revelations. I speak not of Dreams wherein Future Things were foretold; I am not discourfing of Prophetick Visions: But all that I intend is this, That God is sometimes to influence on the Minds of Men by the communication which he gives of himself, and of his Will, even in the nightfeason, when deep Sleep falleth upon Men, or in Slumbering on the Bed : then he vouchsafes to open the Ears of Men, and fealeth their Instruction, that he may (as it follows in the next Verse) withdraw Man from bis

Practifes.

his Purpose, (or as'tis in the Hebrew, from his Work) from his finful Practifes, and that he may hide Pride from Men; that is, that he may humble him, and bring him low, and fet his Sins in order before him, and affright him with the view of them, and that he may at length raise him up, and shew Mercy unto him in delivering him from the Pit of Destruction, as it follows in the ensuing Verse, He keepeth back his Soul from the Pit, and his Life from perishing by the Sword. The Penitent Pfalmist likewife acquaints us, That his Repentance was forwarded by Communications which he had experience of when the darkness of Night hover'd over him: Thou hast vifited me in the Night, Pfal. 17.3. And what was the Effect of fuch Visits he tells us in Pfal. 16.7. My Reins instructed me in the Nightseason; I am wonderfully enlighten'd even in Darkness, I am admonish'd of my Duty, I am made sensible of my Sins, and I am reclaim'd from them. I could relate how Arnobins, a Pagan, was brought to Christianity by Dreams and Discoveries which he had in the Night. And from feveral other Examples I could make it good, that the All-wife God, who best knoweth how to deal with the Sons of Men, is pleas'd fometimes to reveal himfelf to them in those Seasons when they are retir'd from the World, and are shut up in Darkness and Silence, and are refreshing themselves with Sleep and Repose. This (as well as the other Dispenfations of Providence) is to be improved to our Repentance.

Next, I may mention those extraordinary Occurrences which strike Men with Admiration and Amazement, with Fear and Horrour, and prove advantageous to them towards their acknowledging the Truth, and renouncing their former evil

Practifes. Thus Nebuchadnezzar was brought to acknowledge and worship the true God, by the miraculous Preservation of the three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace. The Magi, the Wife Men of the East, were brought to Christ by the Conduct of a Star. Their Art, and God's Providence, concurr'd together. These Astrologers, these Stargazers, were led by their Profession and Skill to enquire into our Saviour's Horoscope; and the Divine Providence made use of that to bring them to worship Christ, and it is probable to the difowning and renouncing of their former Follies and Superstitions; for we are told by some Ecclefiastick Writers, that when they return'd into their own Country, they were Baptized, and receiv'd the Christian Faith. We read that a Look of Christ dissolved Peter into Penitential Tears, Luke 22. 61. One Glance of our Saviour made him turn his Eves inward, and reflect on what he had done, and immediately he went out and wept bitterly. The Centurion, who was engag'd by his Office to attend the Execution of our Saviour, was converted by observing the wonderful things that happened at that time, and he cried out, Truly this is the Son of God, Mat. 27. 54. Dionyfins the Areopagite, was brought to the acknowledgment of the true God, and the Christian Faith, by that Prodigy which he beheld at our Saviour's Passion, viz. The Eclipse of the Sun, which according to the course of Nature was then impossible.

The Conversion of Saul (afterwards call'd Paul) was very strange and miraculous: A Light from Heaven struck upon him, and at the same time illuminated his Mind, and blinded his Eyes; and with

with the Light there came an unexpected Voices faying, Saul, Saul, why perfecutest thou me? The Jailor (of whom I spake before) was converted after an extraordinary and unusual manner, that is, by Occasion of an Earthquake, which shak'd the Foundations of the Prison, and opened the Doors, and loosed the Bands of the Prisoners. Whereupon the Jailor trembled and quaked, as well as the Earth, and came, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and earnestly desir'd to know what he must do to be saved.

I might here relate out of Ecclesiastical History, how Constantine the Great was converted to the Christian Belief by sight of a Cross in the Skies with this Inscription, By this overcome. And he proved victorious against Maxentius, and favour'd Christianity ever after. These are Instances of unusual and strange Means of Conversion, and many more might be added.

It were easy to shew, that the Judgments of God upon Sinners have proved effectual for the moving and changing of Men's Hearts: To which may be refer'd the Instance of Waldo, from whom the Waldenses took their Name; he was turn'd from his evil way of Life by the sudden Death of one of his Companions.

But I pass to some Methods of Providence of another nature. It is the Will and Pleasure of God, the holy Conversation of his Servants should be likewise observed and taken notice of, in order to Conversion and the Work of Repentance. A holy and blameless Life is intended for the reclaiming

This therefore may be one great Reason why so few are converted and reclaim'd in these days, namely, because the Conversation of those that profess Christianity, is not as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Men live not according to their Excellent Principles, and their Manners contradict their Verbal Profession. Hence it is that many are rather harden'd in their Sins, and encourag'd

courag'd in their Prophaneness, than any ways moved to Repent of their doings. But you that fincerely defire to return unto God, make use of the Holy Conversation of those few Servants of God whom you behold; mind their Lives, obferve their Behaviour, and you will find that they are very charming and attractive; they have power in them by the Divine Bleffing, to call you off from the pursuit of your Sins, and to cause you to love Religion, and the Ways of God. Wherever then you fee an Upright Godly Man, stedfastly view his gracious Deportment, gaze on the Beauties of Holiness which you espy in him, and never defift till you are brought to an Imitation of him, and then be thankful unto God for vouchfafing you this Help to Conversion and Repentance.

Another Act and Dispensation of God's Providence which hath been made use of, and hath proved effectual in order to Conversion and Repentance is this, namely, the Sufferings of God's Servants for the Truth. The beholding and confidering of these made great numbers of Proselites and Converts in the Primitive Times. stin Martyr tells us in his first Apology which he wrote for the Christians, that as his Conversion was begun by reading and throughly weighing fome Sentences in Plato's Writings, so it was compleated by his observing the Christians to be aposou we's Savalor, undaunted at Death. They underwent all Torments without Fear and Cowardice, the Confideration of which made him turn Christian. In his Dialogue with Trypho he hath these words; " By how much the more those " feveral " several forts of Torments (which he had rec-" kon'd up in the words immediately preceed-"ing) are inflicted on us, by so much the more " the number of the Faithful increases, and there are daily added to the Church new Worship-" pers of Jesus. It is recorded of Alban, a Citizen of Verulam, the British Proto-Martyr, the first that suffered Death for the Profession of Christianity in this our Island, that when he came to be Executed, he Pray'd so fervently, he Discourfed so Christianly, and shew'd so much Patience and Courage, that his Executioner, who was commanded to behead him, fell down, and cast away his Sword, and was converted to the Chriftian Faith, and was executed with that Holy Man. I mention this particularly, because I had a mind to propound to you an Instance even of one of our own Country-men.

But there are innumerable Examples of this fort in Ecclesiastical Story. There you read how Persons imbraced Christianity upon seeing the couragious Deaths of the Christian Martyrs. The invincible Patience under their Sufferings, had Force and Vertue to perswade others to be Christians: their undaunted Carriage was an Invitation to Heathens to profess the Gospel. The Blood of Christians became the Seed of the Church, and sprang up into a plentiful Harvest. Blood of Martyrs was the best Rubrick to direct their Devotions; by that they were guided to the true and right way of being Religious; by beholding the Constancy of Christian Sufferers, they chose to be of that Faith which indued them with fo great a Courage. And if God shall think

think good to exercise his Church again, with the like Trials, you know what Improvement to make of them. When you see those Persons suffer after that manner, remember that their Example ought to influence on you. They should powerfully incite you to bid farewel to every vicious Habit, and fit your felves to own and embrace that Religion, which renders the true Professors of it so Valorous and Couragious.

I might go on, and shew you, That there are other Ways, and those very strange and unexpected, wherein the Divine Providence hath been pleas'd to operate on the Hearts of the Unconverted and Unregenerate, and to call them to the faving Acknowledgment of the Truth. To this Purpose I will leave with you this notable

Story, as I find it related in a Learned \* Author: One Genefius, being the Chief of the Stage-Players, was commanded by Dioclesian, to act a Play in Derision of the Christian

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\* Dr. Crakanthorp. in his Defence of Constantine. Ex Martyrolog. Rom. & Mart. Usuardi in 25 diem August,

Religion, and accordingly he did so, before the Emperor. To represent a Custom which at that Time obtain'd among the Christians, he was laid on his Couch, upon the Theatre, and then like one of the Clinicks, he call'd for Baptism, and one that personated a Priest, being brought, ask'd him whether he believ'd, who answer'd he did; then he was baptiz'd, and according to the Usage then, he was apparell'd in White. Soon after, this Mimical Christian was led to be executed; but then this Play was turn'd into sad Earnest; for it pleas'd Z 3

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God, at that very Time, to turn the Heart of this Actor, and to convert him to Christianity. The Image and Representation of the Thing; that is, Of being a Christian, so wrought upon his Mind, that it made him a Christian in reality. Whereupon, instead of Deriding, he began to adore and bless Christ, and seriously exhorted the Emperor, and all the Spectators, to embrace the Holy Christian Faith, as himself did: At which the Emperor being enrag'd, commanded him to be severely tormented; but when by no Torments whatsoever, he could be drawn from the constant Profession of Christ, he was at last put to Death, by being beheaded.

Thus the very Theatre shall produce Converts, when it feems good to the Divine Providence, which can make the Prophane Actings and Jestings of some Persons, to be an Occasion of their Conversion in good Earnest: But this must not encourage you, or any other Persons, to go to Play-Houses; for they are of themselves unlawful, and therefore to repair to them, must needs be so. You must avoid all such Entertainments as these; which administer to Lewdness and Prophaneness. This only I offer to you, as proper Advice, That seeing strange and improbable Occurrences may become instrumental to that great and worthy End, which I have fo often mention'd, you attend to all good Impressions that are made upon you, by those Things which happen to you, of what Nature soever they are. Take Notice of the Objects that are offer'd to you. Improve all the Passages and Transactions of your Lives; make them ferviceable to this great End of amending

mending your Hearts and Lives. To promote this, endeavour to make the most common and ordinary Accidents useful to you. Improve every Occurrence of Providence, though it feems little and contemptible. That which passes among Men for a mere Cafualty, a Mischance, may justly be confider'd and weigh'd by you. The meanest Thing hath sometimes administred towards the Conversion of a Man, and hath produc'd new Thoughts and Refolves in him. A petty Disappointment, a sad Story, a sudden Memento, a Clap of Thunder, a Flash of Lightning, the Tolling of a Bell, the striking of a Clock, a fudden Fright, and many other Things of the like Nature, have been the Occasion of a very great Change in Men's Minds and Manners, and have prov'd happy Instruments of their Converfion and Repentance. See therefore, That you be very mindful and observant of all Events whatsoever; and let every overture of Divine Providence promote the Amendment of your Lives. This shall suffice to be spoken, concerning the fourth and last Instrument or Means of Conversion and Repentance, viz. The Observing and Improving all the Acts and Dispensations of God's Providence.

And thus I have finish'd the several Particulars, which I propos'd to treat of, when I first entred upon these Words; and I know not that I have omitted any thing that is requisite to the explaining of this Grace and Duty. I have handled all the Necessary Heads which appertain to it; namely, The Nature of Repentance, both Legal and Evangelical; the several Asts and Parts of both,

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as also the genuine Effects and Fruits of them. I have answer'd the Cavils and Objections which are generally made against Repentance. Then I propounded those Motives which are most likely to stir you up to the Practise of this Grace. Lastly, I offer'd such Rules and Directions; as will certainly lead you to the Attainment of it. And in all the feveral Parts of my Discourses, I inferted fuch Applications and Inferences, as were proper to the Matter I treated of. And thus it was very necessary to be very large and ample in the discussing of this great and weighty Doarine. Let it appear, I pray, by your Behaviour, That you have not been idle and unconcern'd Hearers. I having finish'd my Preaching on this Subject, it remains now, That you Pra-Etise. And that you may do so, let me acquaint you, That there are certain Peculiar Times which more fignally require the Practife of this Duty. There are some more Proper and Especial Seasons of Repentance, and they are such as these;

1. Presently after the Commission of Sin, take the first Opportunity, after you have fallen, to rise again; though Sin hath surpriz'd you, yet must it by no means dwell with you: Though it hath sound Admission, yet must it immediately be ejected by unseigned Sorrow and Repentance; for by every Moment of Delay, you make new Additions to your Sins; whereas the sooner you return to your Duty, the more easily will the incens'd Majesty of Heaven vouchsafe you a Pardon. Thus Peter, presently upon the denying of his Master, went out and wept bitterly, and was soon receiv'd into Favour. However, Let

not one Day pass over your Heads, before you humbly confess your Sins, and heartily bewail them. You must always observe this Rule, Repent every Day, of the Sins of that Day.

2. Repentance is to be folemnly acted, and particularly renew'd, before your coming to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We are bid to examine our felves, before we eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup; and that Self-Examination is in order to our condemning our felves, for our finful Ways, and heartily grieving for them, and forfaking them. Thus that folemn Ordinance should be a special Occasion of acting this Grace in a more eminent Manner.

3dly, An other folemn Time of performing this Duty, is, When God's Judgments and Punishments for Sin, are denounc'd against us. Thus the very Threatning of Judgment and Destruction to the People of Nineveh, made them betake themselves seriously to Repentance. And we must interpret those Threatnings against them, and other Sinners, as belonging to us, so long as we continue in those Sins, for which God threatned to punish them.

4. When these Punishments and Judgments are actually inslicted on us, unquestionably there is an other Season of Repentance; of searching our Hearts and Lives, and grieving for the Sinfulness of them. When you behold the severe Judgments of God upon the Nation, or upon our own Persons; we may assure our selves, That these are Summons to Repentance; and if you

do not take notice of them, you flew your felves to be insensate. If you do not observe the right Seasons of Repentance, it will prove very fatal and destructive to you, as you read it did to the Jews. Christ blamed and upbraided them for this, That though they were Weather-wife, and could difcern the Face of the Sky, and make Prognostications from what they saw there; yet they would not differn the present Season which God defign'd should lead them to Repentance, if they would improve it. Our Saviour wept over Jerusalem, for this very cause, If, or, O that thou hadst known in this thy Day, the Things that concern thy Peace! They had a particular Day, a proper Season of Repenting and Turning to God; but they neglected it. And it feems this had been the Practice of their Ancestors long before, as the Prophet Jeremiah complains of them, Chap. 8. 7. The Stork in the Heavens knoweth her appointed Times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the Time of their Coming; but my People know not the Judgment of the Lord: They know it not so as to repent of their Sins, which procure that Judgment, as the Prophet faith in the Verse following, No Man repenteth him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? The very Irrational Creatures are obfervant of the Season which concerns them; but vain Man foresees not the Day of Calamity and Judgment; and when it approaches, yea, actually arrives, he is fo blind and stupid, as not to make it an Occasion and Opportunity of Repenting, and Turning unto the Lord.

But do you beware lest you be guilty of this great Stupidity and Infatuation. When you difcern the Hand of God stretched-out; when his Judgments are upon your felves, or upon the whole Land, learn Repentance. Thus the Time of Sickness (whether it respects your selves only, or much more if it be a spreading Mortality) the Time of Scarcity and Famine, the Time of War and Bloodshed, the Time of Publick Distress and Danger, of what kind soever; all these are Seasons which have a special Mark set upon them by Providence; and 'tis our Duty to observe them seriously, and wisely to improve them. When outward Calamities and Judgments oppress you, then look inward, and mourn for your Sins. Change worldly Sorrow for godly Sorrow. Divert your worldly Grief, and draw it off, and drain it into this Channel. Let Sorrow for Sin swallow up all your other Sorrow. Let Anguish and Grief spend themselves wholly here.

5ly, After you have receiv'd fome fingular Mercy from God; after you have been deliver'd from some eminent Danger and Distress; think your selves oblig'd to renew your Repentance in a folemn Manner. The Goodness of God, as well as his Justice and Severity, is design'd to lead thee to Repentance.

oly and Lastly, When you see Sin every where abounding; when you descry a General Corruption of Men's Lives and Manners; when you observe a Despissing of whatever is Good and Holy,

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Holy, and a countenancing of Wickedness and Prophaneness; then assure your selves, That the Catholick Contagion calls for Universal Repentance. When Things are thus, we may fay with the Apostle, Now God commands all Men every where to Repent. Now is the true Season of Mourning and Lamenting; of Humbling our felves before God, and shewing our Detestation of those Wickednesses and Abominations. The Age that we now live in, is an Age of the most Crying and Heinous Enormities that ever yet were known. Upon which Account, it ought to be a Season of the deepest Humiliation and Repentance. Let the wicked Lives of others, provoke you to hate and abhor Sin. Let the Hardness and Impenitence of others, excite you to shew your selves true Converts and Penitents. In a Word, Whilst the Wicked World runs into all excess of Riot, and commits all Sins with Greediness, and thereby hastens their Eternal Ruin; do you be so wise, as to curb and check your Lusts and evil Defires; and to conform your Lives to the Laws of Christ, that thereby you may receive the Rewards of Everlasting Happiness. Repent and be Corverted, That your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of Refreshing shall come, from the Presence of the Lord. Bright Say on Laryan Sane

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